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Will Eisner's **SPIRIT** MAGAZINE

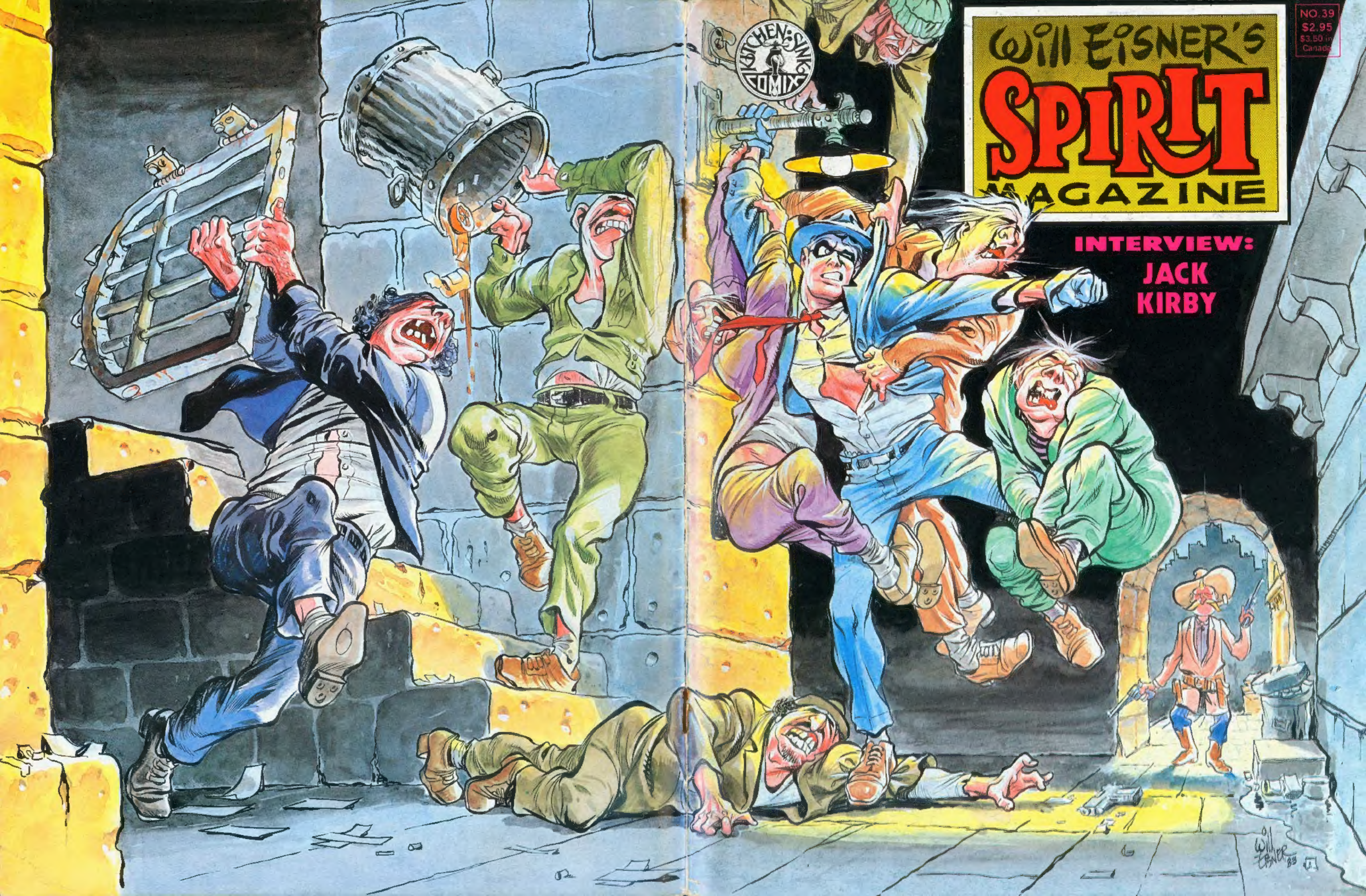
**INTERVIEW:
JACK
KIRBY**



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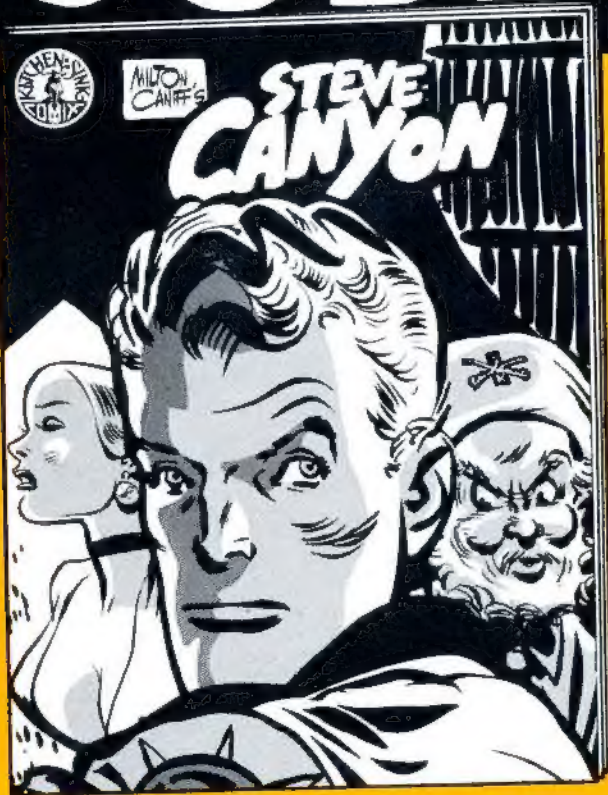
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Will Eisner
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THE DEPT. OF LOOSE ENDS...

Any quick survey of the literature of crime and detection reveals that for every outlaw do-gooder there must be a policeman who for reasons ranging from bumbling inefficiency through outright corruption cannot solve the cases which confront him and who must, whether gratefully or gracelessly, acknowledge the need for a non-official helping hand. Sherlock Holmes has his Inspector Lestrade, The Shadow has his Commissioner Weston. Poor Philip Marlowe is saddled with the Bay City cops, but that's what you get for trying to straighten out messes in southern California. The Batman has Commissioner Gordon, Hawkman has Commissioner Emmett. Even Mickey Mouse has Chief O'Hara. The Spirit also has his own dyadic partner, his foil, his law-enforcing counterpart. And if this man, Commissioner Dolan, isn't quite as congenial as Mickey's Chief O'Hara, at least he isn't as hostile as Holmes' Inspector Lestrade. Dolan, like most of Will Eisner's characters, is a complex person. He is capable of great courage and even greater mistakes. He is sentimental, convention-bound and crusty. His bark is worse than his bite. He is the father of lovely Ellen Dolan, the number one contestant in The Spirit's matrimonial sweepstakes. Dolan has been a regular member of *The Spirit's* supporting cast from the very first story, but anyone wishing to write his biography would be in for trouble because not only is his history presented in a fragmentary and haphazard way, the details are confusing and full of outright contradictions.

Take the man's name, for instance. In all of the post-war stories, it is given as "Eustace," and his middle name is something unspecified which begins with a "P." Unfortunately for continuity buffs, it doesn't really matter how many times Dolan was called Eustace after the war—because in one pre-war story ("Hinkey's Gang," April 19, 1942) he was distinctly addressed as "Diogenes" by no less an authority on the subject than his sister-in-law, Mathilda. If we gave out no-prizes, this is where we'd offer one.

Mathilda Hinkey, by the way, wed Central City's Mayor Blast in that story. But when she later reappeared in the post-war period ("Poole's Toadstool Facial Cream," June 9, 1946) she was called Mathilda Dolan and was said to be Commissioner Dolan's sister. If we gave out no-prizes, this is where the second one would be offered.

Anyway, getting back to Eustace P. Diogenes Dolan, we next have to face the question of exactly who his father was. In "The O'Dolan" (April 18, 1948, reprinted in *Warren Spirit* No.2 and in *Spirit Color Album, Volume I*) the Dolan family tree is shown. It is clearly stated that the family is of Irish descent (no surprise) and that Eustace P.'s father was one Patrick O'Dolan, Jr., the only son of Patrick O'Dolan, Sr., an immigrant from the Old Country. Imagine, if you will, the consternation this must have caused among fans who had followed *The Spirit* in their Sunday papers from the beginning—they had already been told that Dolan (Diogenes, brother-in-law of Mathilda) was the son of Dead Duck Dolan, a rootin' tootin' sheriff from way out West!

We don't give out no-prizes, but this would be where the third one would be offered if we did. Look, would you settle for a theory about Earth One and Earth Two? No, I thought not. Well, don't say we didn't try...

Dead Duck Dolan was introduced on March 2, 1941. The character harks back to one of Eisner's earliest cartooning influences—Elsie Segar's *Thimble Theatre*, starring Popeye. The sequence in which Popeye met his look-alike father, Poopdeck Pappy, made a great impression on Will when he was a teenager. It was only natural that he would interpret the idea in his own way when he matured. Dolan was the ideal vehicle for the plot (*The Spirit* is, after all, an orphan) and it is a happy coincidence that his big-chinned face, in construction if not detail,

...continued on page 64

Will Eisner's SPIRIT MAGAZINE

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FEBRUARY 1982 • NO. 39

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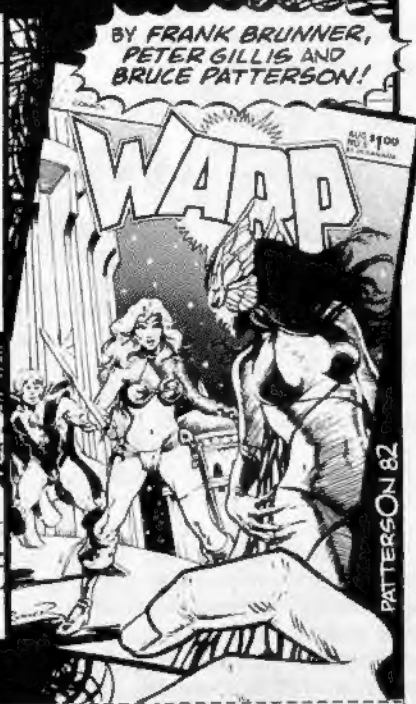
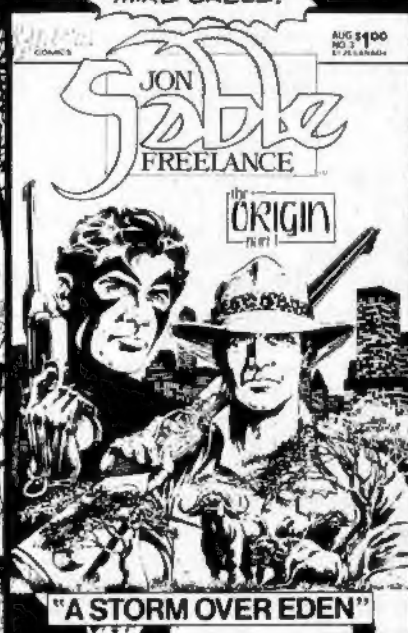
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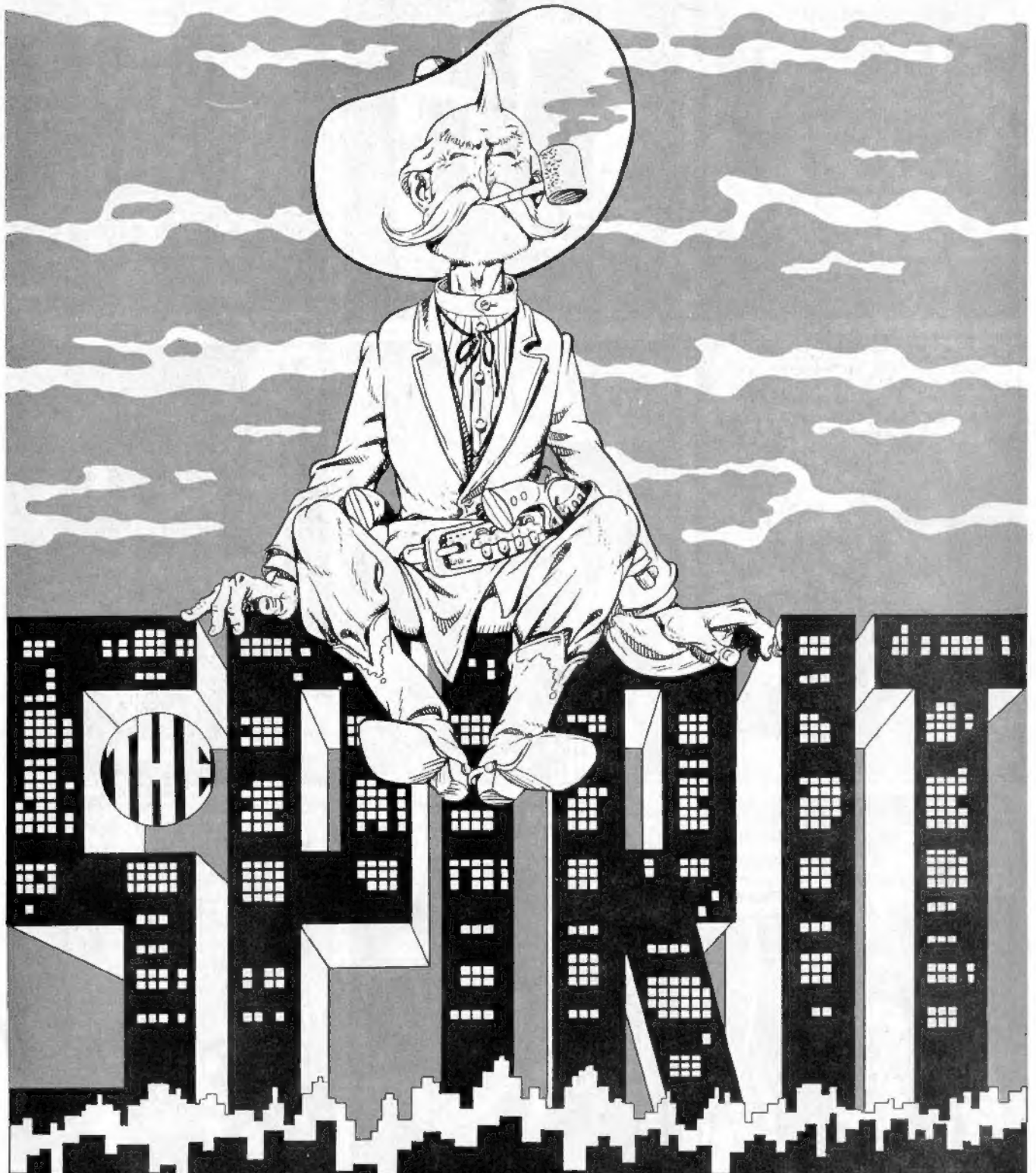
PATTERSON 82

COMIC
BOOK
SECTION

Dead Duck Dolan

Originally Published March 2, 1941

ACTION
Mystery
ADVENTURE



THE SPIRIT, IN REALITY PENNY COLT, WHO
WAS BURIED BY MISTAKE IN WILDWOOD
CEMETERY, NOW USES THE VERY TOMB
TO CARRY ON HIS FIGHT AGAINST CRIME ...

By
WILL EISNER

EVER NOTICE HOW QUIET IT IS
AROUND THE ONE PLACE IN
TOWN WHERE YOU'D THINK
THERE'D BE THE MOST EX-
CITEMENT...? ..POLICE
HEADQUARTERS...

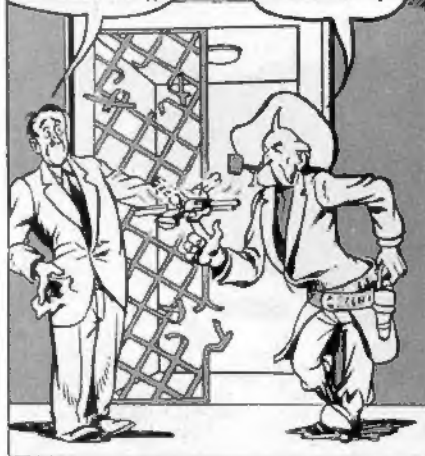


WELL... ONE SUNNY, PEACEFUL
AFTERNOON... AT HEAD -
QUARTERS...



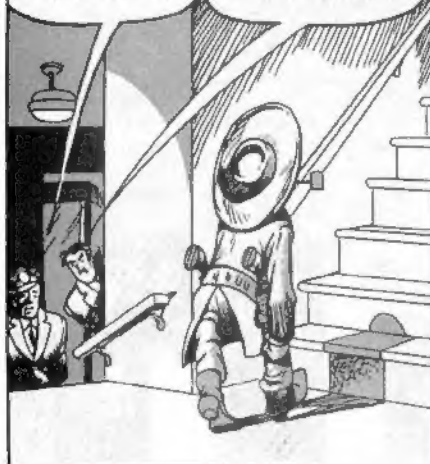
BUT THIS IS
ONLY AN
ELEVATOR...
YOU CAN'T
WALK UP
TWENTY
FLIGHTS!!

WHO SEZ
AH CAINT!
ONE SIDE,
JUNIOR, OR
I'LL START
SHOOTIN'
AGAIN'!



CRAZY OL'
COOT...
HA...HA...HA
...LET
HIM GO...

PROBABLY
A FUGITIVE
FROM A
RODEO...
HA...HA...HA...



FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER...



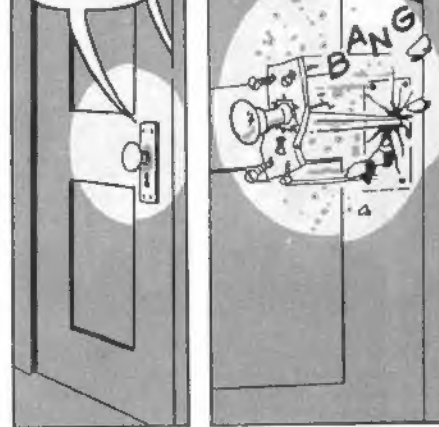
INSIDE DOLAN'S OFFICE...



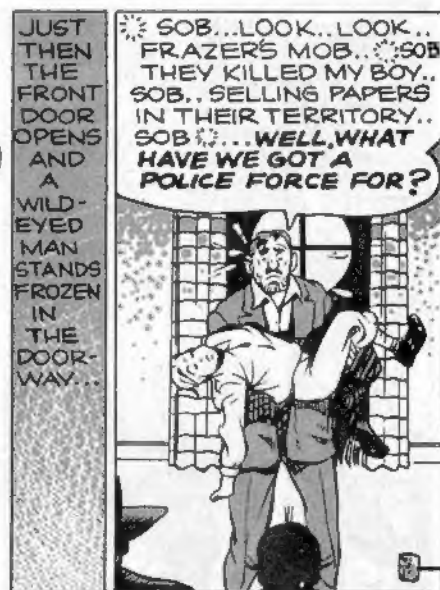
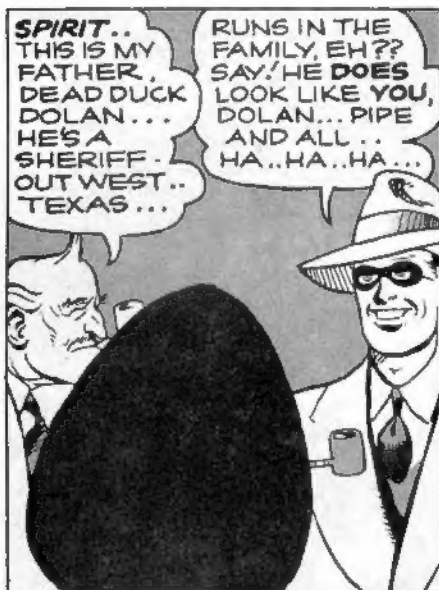
ONE SIDE,
LADY FINGERS,
HE'S MAH
SON!

SEZ YEW!

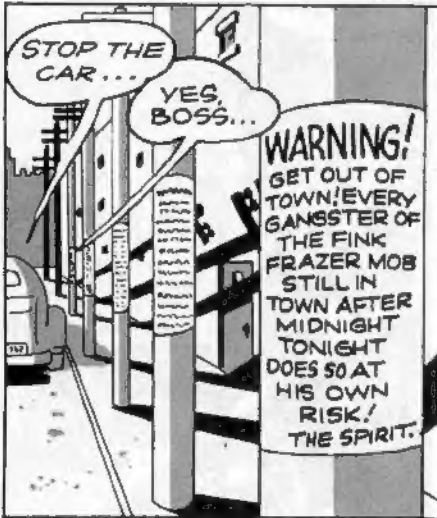
....YOU
CANNOT
GO IN!!







NEXT DAY, THE FOURTH WARD IS STRANGELY QUIET AS NEWSBOYS PASTE POSTERS ON EVERY TELEPHONE POLE.



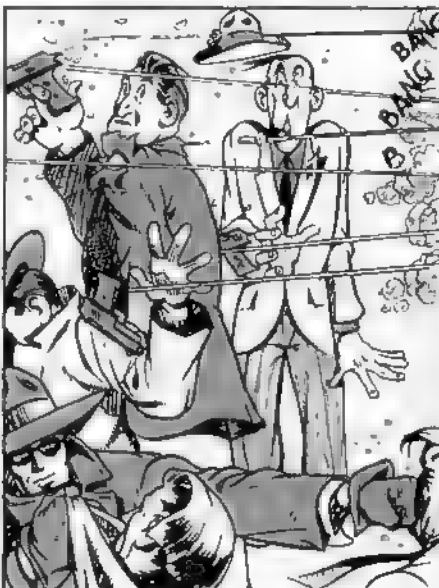
A DEADLY SILENCE SETTLES OVER THE FOURTH WARD... SHUTTERED WINDOWS, BARRICADED DOORS, OFFER MUTE EVIDENCE OF WHAT'S TO COME... THE SPIRIT'S FOOTSTEPS ON THE COLD PAVEMENT SOUND LIKE THE BEAT OF A DYING CLOCK...



NO GANGSTER
IS SAFE IN THE
FOURTH WARD...
ONE BY ONE
THEY FALL
BEFORE THE
THUDDING
FISTS OF THE
GREAT
CRIMEFIGHTER!



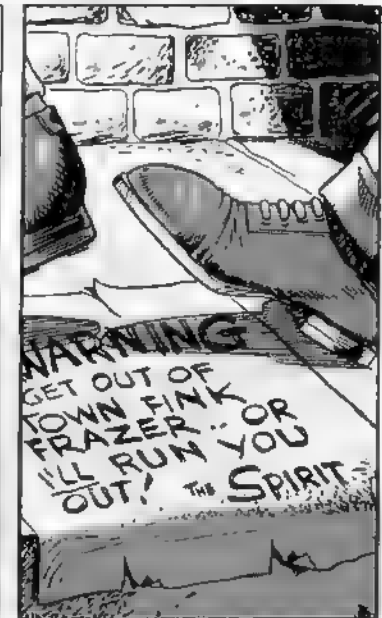
AT FRAZER'S POOL PARLOR...

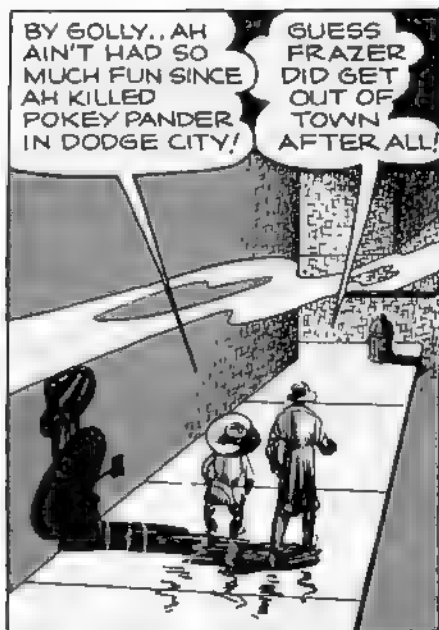


IN ANOTHER PART
OF TOWN, FINK
STALKS GRIMLY
THROUGH THE
SILENT STREETS...
A STRONG WIND
MOANS SOFTLY...



SUDDENLY.





"Like
No Other
Comic"

VOL. CXXVII No. 46

The Times

WEST, SUNDAY, JANUARY 15, 1414

MONTHLY

CHAOS RULES!

'A Night In Iest'

By DAVE SIM

Special to Aardvark Vanadium Inc.

When I first wrote this story, I was in a bit of a hurry. I had to get it done in time for the deadline. I was a bit of a mess, but I managed to get it done. I was a bit of a mess, but I managed to get it done. I was a bit of a mess, but I managed to get it done.

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Still Sideways

MADISON Jan 14 Aardvark Vanadium Advertising reported in a press release that there will be a price change in the long running comic book series Cerebus. The price change will be a 10% increase. The price change will be a 10% increase. The price change will be a 10% increase.

Fifth Annual Trilateral Summit Recently-elected Prime Minister Cerebus discusses foreign policy with Lord Julius of Palnu and Duke Leonardo of New Sepra.

He said this information was passed on to him in a phone conversation with Aardvark Vanadium publisher Den. Den said the information was passed on to him in a phone conversation with Aardvark Vanadium publisher Den. Den said the information was passed on to him in a phone conversation with Aardvark Vanadium publisher Den.

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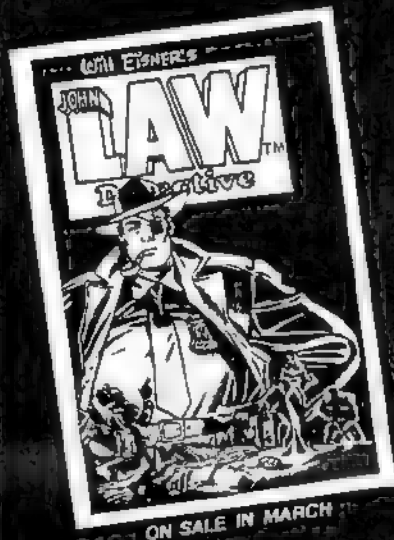
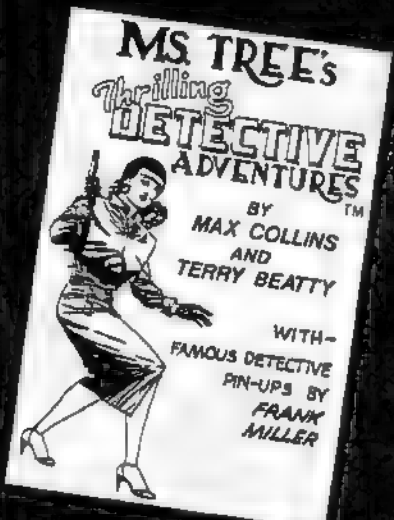
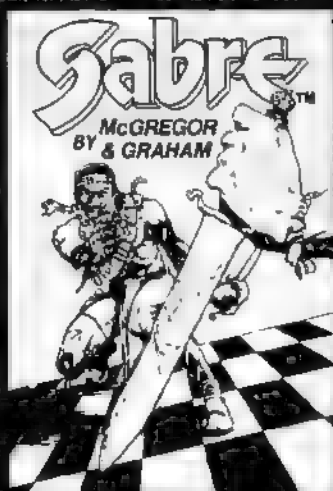
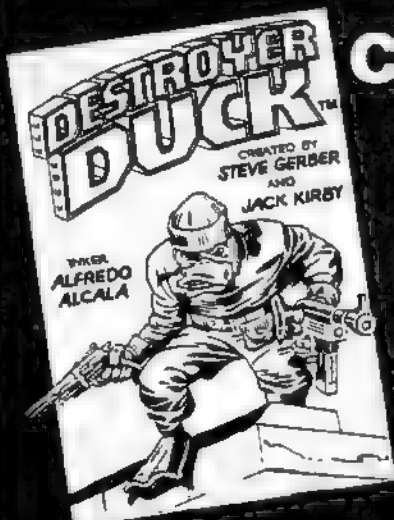
Mr. Brunning, who produces all the advertising for Aardvark Vanadium, also stressed that the comic is printed on a higher grade newspaper than most pulp comics. This book has been printed on Premium 70 a winter newspaper. This book has been printed on Premium 70 a winter newspaper. This book has been printed on Premium 70 a winter newspaper.

In a related development, I talked about the current Cerebus stories being printed sideways. Dave has decided to use the format until the conclusion of 'High Society' storyline, after which it will be printed normally.

While John Byrne has it formal for his 'Negative Four', I mentioned that Sim's reason for this approach had nothing to do with the comic. I mentioned that Sim's reason for this approach had nothing to do with the comic. I mentioned that Sim's reason for this approach had nothing to do with the comic.

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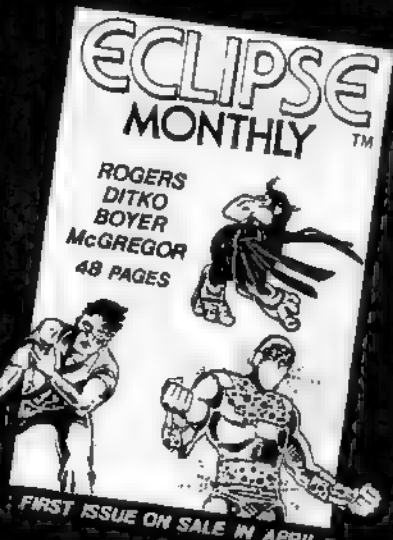
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Baxter book — 48 pages —
6 monthly issues: \$12.00)

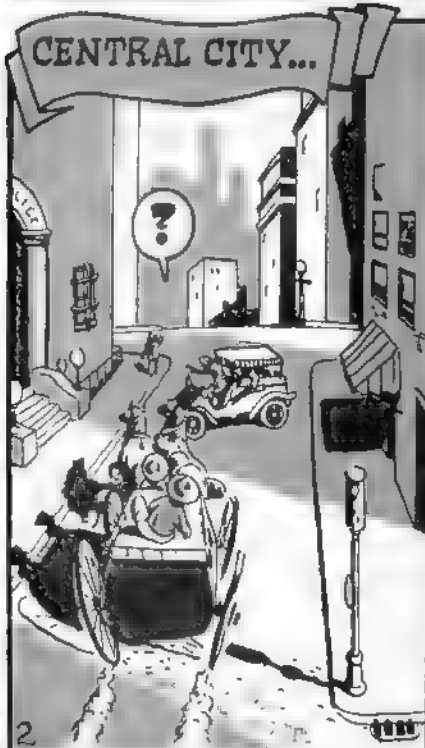
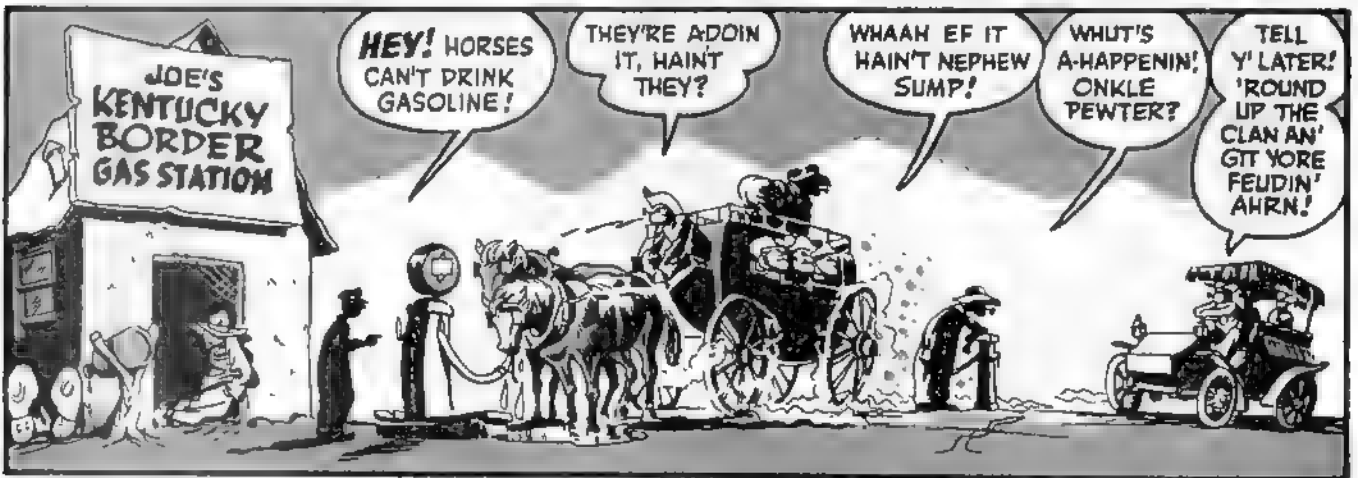
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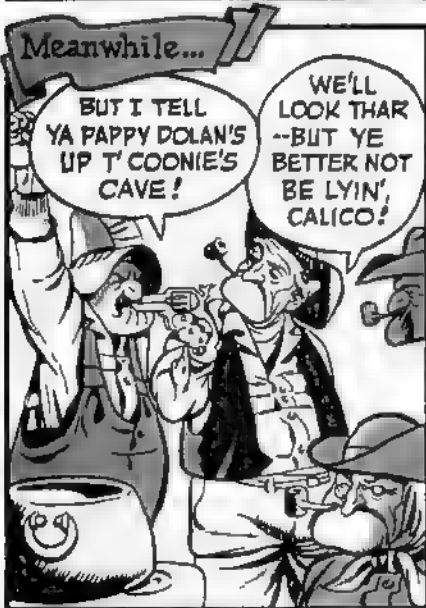




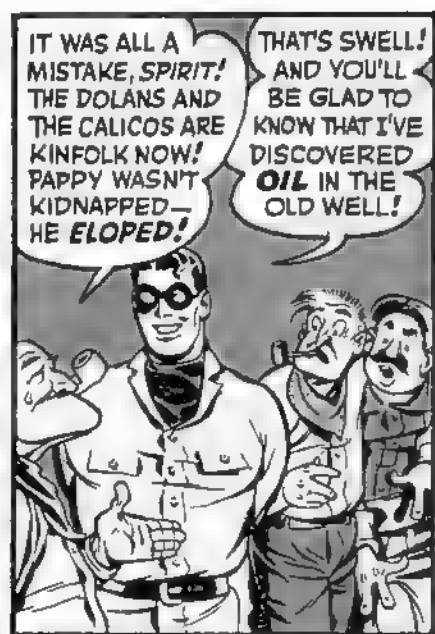














JACK KIRBY

Jack Kirby got some of his early training in comics at the Eisner-Iger studio. After leaving, he teamed with Joe Simon in one of the greatest teams during the Golden Age of Comics. Later, Kirby was a driving force at Marvel. Will Eisner conducted this interview in a hotel lobby during the San Diego Comics Convention, which both Eisner and Kirby attended, in July, 1982.

EISNER: Jack, we started working together at Eisner & Iger...1937-38, right? Just for background, let's start there and work our way around to things like how you work and philosophy, okay?

KIRBY: Okay, great! I really got serious about comics working for Eisner & Iger because they were serious. They felt it was a valuable medium. I can only tell you that my background was limited. I suppose you'd call me a street kid.

EISNER: Well, yes, one could. In those days there weren't many experienced comic artists. I was hiring anybody who could draw. Did you work somewhere else before us?

KIRBY: Well, I worked for Max Fleischer. I did animation. I was about 17½. I was an in-betweenener. I worked along a row of tables about 200-300 yards long. It was like a factory. I began to see the studio as a garment factory. I associated the garment factory with my father and I didn't want to work like my father. I love being an individual. I suppose the second generation sees things differently than the one before it. My father's generation all worked in shops at long rows of machines, and they turned out pieces for finished garments. That was my father's job.

EISNER: I can see where you'd want to break out of that and become an indi-

vidual.

KIRBY: I wanted to break out of that just like I wanted to break out of the ghetto. I was born on the lower East side of Manhattan. On Essex Street. I grew up on Suffolk Street...

EISNER: I know it well. I was born in the Williamsbridge neighborhood...not far from there.

KIRBY: Of course, that was the East side, John Garfield territory...

EISNER: Well, you're the John Garfield of comic books [chuckles].

KIRBY: ...Edward G. Robinson territory. Movies were my refuge. It wasn't a pleasant place to live in, crowded, no place to play ball. You became a toreador at an early age, just dodging the ice wagons.

Your vacations were rather limited. I remember I spent my vacations on a fire escape.



Popeye puts his best foot forward in the Fleischer Studios' animation test for beginning "in-betweeners." Kirby's job was to complete the extreme poses with intermediate figures producing smooth continuous movement. Kirby also worked on Betty Boop. (1935)

EISNER: Well, there is I suppose something to be said about the similarity of our backgrounds. But 'inner city' living imprints itself differently on each of us. For you, I guess, it left you angry. You told me once that you were a "wild, angry, fierce kid." I guess I looked upon my life there with a little more perspective...even tolerance. Maybe it's because there is a couple of years difference between us... eh?

KIRBY: I can tell you that maybe it was a sensitivity on my part. I didn't like the ghetto and I was fearful of it. I know people who had the same impression. I think the ghetto leaves a life-long—I don't know whether to call it a scar or an experience.

EISNER: I think it's an experience.

KIRBY: Looking back, I agree.

EISNER: I think it affects your perspective because it remains in the memory as a frame of reference.

KIRBY: Well, it gave me a fierce drive to get out of it. It made me so fearful of it that in an immature way, I fantasized a dream world more realistic than the reality around me.

EISNER: Yet, isn't it too simplistic to credit that early environment alone with what affected your work? Were you conscious of the fact that perhaps the anger and the kind of force evident in your work is a direct reflection of that?

KIRBY: Yeah, I think anger will save your life. I think anger will give you a drive that will save your life or change it in some manner. I think gangsters may have the same kind of drive except they went in a different direction. I couldn't disgrace my parents because I loved them. I could never do the kind of things they would object to. In fact, when Fleischer moved the studios to Florida, my mother wouldn't let me go [chuckles].

EISNER: Hah! My mother didn't want me to go into the theatre to go out with a road show and design sets because it was "a terrible life." [laughter]

KIRBY: I wanted to go to Hollywood, I wanted to go to California. I had a dream of becoming an actor and my mother wouldn't let me go. The depression was on full force, and whatever you brought home counted. My mother was afraid we'd lose touch, and to her, money was important. Whatever you brought into the house made it that much easier for her to buy food.

EISNER: Those were the days when families expected everyone to contribute. We all got out and worked. I sold papers so that those few dollars could come in to make it easier to set a respectable table on Friday nights. [chuckles]

KIRBY: I give you an idea of what kind of kid I was. When I'd go pick up papers off the truck at the building, I'd be the little kid that got trampled [laughter]

EISNER: I had a little stand on Wall St. where I sold papers...

KIRBY: I sold papers, too. I was terrible at it.

EISNER: So was I. [laughter] I had trouble making change during rush hour.

KIRBY: And I'd throw 'em away.

EISNER: No. I didn't. Listen, I was getting \$3.50 a week from running that stand, and that was big money in 1934.

KIRBY: You had more patience for it. I think you've been more mature through the years than I have.

EISNER: Well...let's get back to your beginning with Eisner & Iger. I'd like to see how much you recall.

KIRBY: Well, I remember admiring you and Jerry [Iger] very much for the fact that I admire anybody who is a thorough professional. I admire people who know what they're doing. Anything you told me to do, I would have done because I felt I was learning something. I wanted to learn how to be good so I'd never go back to that ghetto again. If you would have told me to march to Russia at that time I would have done it.

EISNER: I remember we had a good rapport. You and I and Lou Fine...I felt the

was limited. I felt I could increase whatever dimensions I was reaching for through men like you and Jerry, because you knew the discipline, you knew your job, and that's what I wanted. I wanted to know my job.

EISNER: Back at Eisner & Iger, do you remember how the shop was set up? I remember it, but each of us has a different perception.

KIRBY: Yes, I remember.

EISNER: It was a big room. A row of drawing boards set along the wall. You sat along the wall to the right of the entrance.

KIRBY: I can't remember whether it was a desk or a table...

EISNER: A drawing board. I was sitting in the center at one end, and the others were sitting around the perimeter of the room. You sat, I remember, to my right. You pencilled on a two-ply paper with pre-printed panels, right?

KIRBY: I remember all the guys. Although we all liked each other and we'd trade stories and things, we never horsed around. We always felt that we had to



Kirby did *The Diary of Dr. Hayward* for *Jumbo Comics* in 1939 at Eisner & Iger.

shop seemed to hang around us. We always seemed to work well together.

KIRBY: I always felt you were the kind of guy I could learn from. Whatever rapport we had was a process of learning for me.

EISNER: I want to say parenthetically and for publication that I have not paid Jack to say this. [laughter]

KIRBY: No, and I'm not saying this out of sentiment. I wound up in combat one time, and I met the Lauffen SS. They were thorough professionals and I talked to them and I felt that if I was going to survive, I was going to have to be like them. And I wasn't. They were professionals at combat, and I knew that I could never beat them unless I became like them.

EISNER: That's a fascinating point.

KIRBY: In essence, I wanted to become Will Eisner and Jerry Iger.

EISNER: Hmmm...really, did you think of that then? Were you conscious of thinking that?

KIRBY: Yes. I knew that my knowledge

do a job. I think that feeling was prevalent in all young people in New York.

EISNER: Were you ever close, back then, to Lou Fine?

KIRBY: No, I don't feel that I was ever close to anybody. Even when I was partners with Joe Simon for a very long time we weren't...well we couldn't be the... well... like Tom Swift.

EISNER: Or Siegel and Shuster...

KIRBY: Or Siegel and Shuster. I believe we were professionals, not only working partners, but professionals that had something to give to each other that culminated in a product worth selling. Joe and I manufactured products worth selling. And they sold. They sold a lot.

EISNER: Yes, they sure did!

KIRBY: It was a professional relationship. Of course, we were friends, but we came from different backgrounds. Joe came from a middle class background and I'd never met a middle class person. I used to admire Joe's father because he looked like a politician. A politician in



Three important influences on young artists of the time were...



my neighborhood had a lot of clout. He was a guy who sent men around with \$5 to get the votes out. I remember one guy who came to give my father \$5 to vote Democratic [chuckle]. That week I was learning Civics in school and they told me that was wrong and I threw this guy down the stairs. [laughter] I felt he was corrupting my father.

EISNER: I remember seeing a lot of that in the tenement where I lived.

KIRBY: We were just raw young people trying to figure out who we were.

EISNER: In those days you had some animation training but you were a very damn good realistic artist. I remember putting you on *The Count of Monte Cristo*. Which was it...yours or Lou's *Count of Monte Cristo*?

KIRBY: I can tell you that I tried very hard, especially for you and Jerry. I happen to like you as well...

EISNER: Well, that's certainly nice. Thank you [laughter].

KIRBY: I worked extra hard, not only for myself, but I felt I had to produce a good magazine for you.

EISNER: I remember that you were a very serious guy and I liked that. But so was I. Let's talk about style and technique. When you were drawing then, were you doing any self-study, like working from an anatomy book? Did you go to any school at all?

KIRBY: I went to a place called the Education Alliance for one day. They threw me out for drawing too fast with charcoal [chortle].

EISNER: I hate to interrupt you, Jack,

but when you came to our shop, you drew fairly well. You had a very distinctive style. I can close my eyes and see you working now. Very preoccupied!

KIRBY: Believe me, it was an agonizing process for me.

EISNER: It was? You seemed very fast and facile. Did you pick up an anatomy book somewhere and study it?

KIRBY: No, I didn't...I had to do it logically, by myself. I feel that I'm a guy who knows people well. I like to know people well. I like to know people in character. I knew the gangsters and I knew the cops.

EISNER: Well, all right. You understood people but your grasp of the mechanics of drawing...that's what I'm talking about. I recall feeling that I was still a 'learner'...we were all concerned with learning the craft, as you say. Did you do anything about learning in a formal way? Do you recall what you worked from?

KIRBY: Yes, I especially worked from the movies. I think I was brought up by Harry Warner [chuckles]. Whatever movie I was watching I would see it about seven times and my mother would have to get me out of the theater. I believe the naturalism and the drama that was inherent in the pictures left an impression on me that I wanted to duplicate. I tried to duplicate that faithfully.

EISNER: I remember you were working with pen and ink and you later switched to a brush. While you were at Eisner & Iger, I remember your tight

pencils and I think I remember you working with a pen for awhile. So these techniques you simply picked up from anybody around the shop.

KIRBY: I felt at the time that I really didn't want to be a Leonardo da Vinci. I didn't want to be a great artist, but I loved comics and I wanted to be better than 10 other guys.

EISNER: So you studied other people's stuff, like Caniff's, for example...

KIRBY: I looked at [Hal] Foster. I loved the fluidity in Alex Raymond. He had a naturalness in his figures that I loved. Caniff had a way of shading that I liked. I didn't swallow the entire technique. I cannibalized to an extent and they were my school. I still believe that one man is a school for another. I believe I got things from you that I still use.

EISNER: Well, we got from each other. Your presence in the shop had an influence on me just as it had on anybody else. You always had a kind of dynamism or drive which is still inherent in what you do.

KIRBY: And I can tell you that it all stemmed from fear.

EISNER: [Snort] You're making a very important point. I'm not a psychologist, but it's an understandable element of motivation.

KIRBY: It was fear of failing. It was fear of falling behind and it was fear of being mediocre. I didn't like to be mediocre or secondary.

EISNER: Okay, let's move on! So you left Eisner & Iger after a year or so? I don't even know what the separation cir-



...Caniff's *Terry and the Pirates*, Raymond's *Flash Gordon*, and Foster's *Prince Valiant*.

cumstances were, but I know they were friendly. You went over to Fox...

KIRBY: I went over to Fox and I didn't respect [Victor] Fox as a professional. I respected him just as a boss. I thought he was a great character [chuckles]. "King of the Comics" was a very old phrase, and I sometimes resent it because we use it in such a...

EISNER: Kind of disparaging way...

KIRBY: In a kind of sarcastic way, and we learned it all from Fox. In fact, Al Harvey still speaks like Victor Fox [chorle]. The 'da' and 'dis' kind of...

EISNER: Didn't Fox remind you of Edward G. Robinson?

KIRBY: He was Edward G. Robinson. I remember him walking back and forth watching the artists all the time like a hawk and just saying, "I'm the King of Comics!" [laughter] And we would look back at him and actually he was a joy to us because he made working fun. He was a character in the full sense of being a character.

EISNER: You never thought of him as a character out of a comic book?

KIRBY: No, I never did.

EISNER: You see, he kept getting into trouble...lawsuits all the time. Big deals and so forth. He came to publishing from Wall Street. He worked for Donnenfeld as a bookkeeper, I think. Then he set up on his own. I learned a lot about

'business' from dealing with him.

KIRBY: Actually, Eisner & Iger gave me my first taste of what a business was like. Business to me was a foreign territory. I remember you and Jerry as being efficient and businesslike people who knew what they were doing and I admired that. It was my first taste as to what a business really was and what it should be.

EISNER: But so far as your creative, artistic and technical development, most of it happened from watching other people and there was no formal, structuralized training that you recall, right?

KIRBY: I had no role models except for the people I met.

EISNER: Did you ever begin to think of this as an art form, in the sense that a writer thinks literature is a form of art; or was it just a way of making a living to you? I mean, was it a skill, or a profession?

KIRBY: It was a skill and it was my way of earning a living. Although I love my mother and father, somewhere along the way, I didn't do all the things exactly the way they wanted me to. I doubt if young people ever do. We learn that we are individuals, and we are who we are. I find that you can listen to people's lectures for an hour or two and learn nothing. You just do things the way you want them. You make your own innovations.

It's one of the reasons I believe in people. I believe people are unique; not that they listen to others, just that they watch others. They watch others for mistakes, they watch for the good things, and then they take what they need.

EISNER: So you learned pretty much from imitation, would you say?

KIRBY: I essentially did and I think we essentially do. I hate to say this in a very blatant and basic way, but I think in a way, we're monkeys.

EISNER: Hmmm. That's an interesting idea.

KIRBY: I think that we watch each other and we all want to be leader of the pack. I think basically that that's our drive. If we run a shop, we want to run the best shop. If we draw, we want to draw better than the other guy. I believe that words have no effect on us. I believe that words have an effect on people that are somehow either in a dreaming state or are still in a fearful state.

EISNER: Well, what does have an effect? What is the thing that moves us, really?

KIRBY: Behavior. Just doing or trying things. Making decisions. I think a comic artist is a decision maker. He has that lay-out right in his hands and he's not going to deviate from it.

EISNER: That's a good point. He's making decisions as he's laying it out.

KIRBY: As he's laying it out, and if it doesn't look good to him, he changes the decision, and he becomes a professional by himself. I don't think anybody can do it for you, essentially, you do it for yourself. Somewhere there is a role model that generates that thing inside you, and you go on from there. Sometimes people speak of dedication, but I don't believe in dedication. I believe in drive, a thorough animal drive to accomplish whatever you want to accomplish. I don't mean that in a bad way.

EISNER: I understand...you mean it as a way of achievement. So, back at Victor Fox or even with Eisner & Iger, your drive was to be the best man in the pack. More in particular, you didn't have a message to give, you weren't going to save any worlds, you never have a message particularly...to this day!

KIRBY: To this day, I'm in show business, I'm a performer and I'm going to be the best performer I can.

EISNER: So this is essentially you. It is not necessarily a vehicle for you having something to say to the world, or to say to me.

KIRBY: I have nothing to say to the world because I know that all the words I use are useless. If I have a message, I can only say, "Do what you like, don't hurt anybody along the way, and be as constructive as you can."

EISNER: So the main drive, then, is to develop your skill somewhat in the way of the athlete. Would that be a fair comparison?

KIRBY: Yes, an athlete does the same thing, a show business performer does the same thing. An artist likes style. I can tell a Will Eisner drawing 500 yards away. I feel you're a very valuable individual because you are unique.

EISNER: You're unique too...certainly!

KIRBY: I may be unique in the same manner, and I'd be proud if I am.

EISNER: Well, certainly, I'm not unaware of that fact. Setting modesty aside, because we can't afford modesty, only the very rich can afford modesty [quiet laugh]...

KIRBY: That's true! I think that's why we all like Kennedy because he had already done the rich bit and now he wanted to be like us. So he became like us and we loved him.

EISNER: I never thought of it like that. What I'm saying is that we can't help but become conscious of a 'position' of sorts in the comic book community. Why, all you need do is attend a convention...meet some fans and listen to some of the outrageous flattery. It's hard not to agree with some of the things they say [laughter].

KIRBY: I can tell you, I agree with them wholeheartedly [laughter].

EISNER: Well, Jack, you still have a sense of humor.

KIRBY: I know damn well I still work very hard and I still try very hard to please.

EISNER: What I'm trying to get at is that we're both conscious of the fact that we could leave an imprint. Hopefully. Maybe we influenced somebody. Students always use the word 'influence' very loosely. I mean it as opening new possibilities for the medium.

KIRBY: I don't think it stands. I don't think I've influenced anybody.

EISNER: But you're a role model for somebody. I don't know for who, but we are, to somebody. We must be.

KIRBY: We're role models for people who like to get response. In other words, you can walk around anonymously. I can tell you, for years I walked around in anonymity, being on the East side, being anonymous, being a zero. I didn't want to be a zero.

EISNER: So you're telling me the difference between Jack Kirby on the lower East side and the Jack Kirby today is that the present one is visible and the one way back isn't? I don't get it.

KIRBY: I can tell you that I have enough knowledge now to get a response from anybody. I can tell you that at that time, when I was smaller, I was overlooked by everybody.

EISNER: So what you're doing now is performing. Would you say that? Correct me if you disagree.

KIRBY: No, I agree. I think everybody is a performer. The corporate man is a performer; he's a plotter. His role is to plot. He's going to get that executive seat away from another guy, and he's going

to find a subtle way to do it.

EISNER: Define performing. Is it your art, your drawing, in your composition? Is the doing of it a performance? Where does the performance lie in your case?

KIRBY: In my case, the performance lies in sincerity. In looking for the element that will make another respond to me. I usually deal with science fiction themes, although I've been assigned other types of subjects. I remember Joe and I were the first ones to create the romance comic magazine.

EISNER: That's right. You and Joe Simon worked on a romance line.

KIRBY: Joe and I were working for McFadden Publications at the time. McFadden had comics, and in one of the books we did a feature called "My Date." It suddenly occurred to me that McFadden was the biggest purveyor of romance in the world and was making millions at it and we were sitting on top of the same thing, except there were no romance stories in comics. "My Date" was a prelude.

EISNER: It was the first...at least as far as I remember, it was.

KIRBY: The first romance comics came from that discussion...Ideas come from discussion and there we were, sitting on one of the staples of story telling. In those days, there was either romance, Westerns or crime as the big sellers.

EISNER: Well in that series, and this is a very important point, what did you do, and what did Joe do?

KIRBY: All right, Joe led me along.

EISNER: Well, who wrote the story? Joe or you, or did you discuss it?

KIRBY: Sometimes we discussed it, but most of the time, I wrote the story.

EISNER: The dialogue too?

KIRBY: Story and dialogue.

EISNER: Oh, so it wasn't Joe; you wrote most of the stories. Joe wasn't sure about that.

KIRBY: Joe's function was to associate with the publishers. He was 6'3" and I was 5'4" [laugh]. The publishers would not look at me, and I took that in stride. I knew they wouldn't take me seriously. Joe was highly visible, being 6'3" and be-

ing a reporter, on the *Syracuse Journal*. I admired Joe tremendously for that. I admired him for getting through college, and I admired Joe for coming from what I thought was a middle class background. Joe was an entirely different animal. Joe was my role model for learning how to acquire a different type of character.

EISNER: Interesting parallel here...except the roles were reversed in my partnership relationship with Jerry Iger. The reason I got together with Jerry was because he was a good salesman and I was shy at the time...good at making product and running a shop, period. Jerry had no hesitation about calling on any publisher. Now he was the short guy in the team, but he was a very feisty guy. He was 13 years older than me.

KIRBY: He had the business acumen. He could present himself so that he could get the things you both wanted.

EISNER: Yes, he could get customers. Let's get back to the romance thing. You were writing and Joe was selling. But Joe did some drawing on it.

KIRBY: Yes, he did. Joe is a fine artist. He is one of the best letterers I ever saw.

Joe made some of the best ads ever.

EISNER: He still does advertising work.

KIRBY: Yes, and Joe to me will always be the best. He's a thorough professional.

EISNER: So in the romance series, see if you can walk me through a story.

KIRBY: All right. Eventually, we began the thing, working it out together.

EISNER: So you talked out ideas, like, "let's have a story about the following-boy meets girl, girl meets boy..."

KIRBY: Not necessarily. I would tell him "let's do a story about this," and he wouldn't care what kind of story it was.

It didn't bother Joe. I think what Joe was concerned with was getting a good product. He knew I could write a good product and I think he knew instinctively that his function was to build rapport with publishers. He knew Martin Goodman well. He knew every publisher in the business. Joe was an editor when I went to Fox, a position I never could hope to aspire to.

EISNER: So you discussed the story and

you started to write. You wrote the balloons and you roughly laid it out.

KIRBY: I believe I have a natural flair for writing dramatic stories. Humorous stories. I can do satire. I can imitate like a monkey.

EISNER: So that is what you did in order to get the stuff out, you penciling and Joe inked or what was the procedure?

KIRBY: Yes, Joe inked and lettered.

EISNER: So you wrote the story, laid it out, did the balloons and then you did the pencil. You did the balloons first, before you did the penciling?

KIRBY: Yes.

EISNER: That's what I told you to do at Eisner & Iger [chuckle].

KIRBY: I never deviated from that.

EISNER: I just wondered about that, whether that stuck with you [laugh].

KIRBY: I never deviate from a role model. It works, it will work for anybody. I think that's where it begins.

EISNER: As a matter of fact, it changed later when you were with Marvel and Stan Lee...but I'll get into that later. I want to create a picture here of this operation. So you roughed out the action and you did the balloons, and then you started penciling. I remember your penciling as being fairly tight. At least in my shop it was tight enough so that anybody who was skillful could ink on it.

KIRBY: My pencils were meticulous.

EISNER: Good. So Joe would then come in and ink over it.

KIRBY: Yes, Joe would ink over that.

EISNER: And in order to get stuff out you would be penciling another story while he was inking the first, I gather.

KIRBY: That's right! And we'd get stuff done that fast. There was one time when we worked at DC that they sent us a script and we threw it out.

EISNER: Is that right? Very good!

KIRBY: That didn't win us any friends, but we got the script over that very afternoon. We became known as the fastest men in the field because we learned how to turn out the fastest product.

EISNER: Well, in that connection, I was recently discussing that in an interview with Joe Simon. There are very few teams, like yours and Joe's. Of course, Siegel and Shuster, but the next classic combination that I can remember is you and Joe. You're both part of comic book art history. Which is easy to say, because even my elevator man claims to be part of transportation history [laugh]...not to demean you...

KIRBY: No, I demean nobody. In fact, I have admiration for the ordinary guy.

EISNER: All right, anyway, let's get back to this because I don't want to lose the thread. That partnership developed into a team and that team had an impact on the field. In the process, you turned out a product that had an identity all its own.

KIRBY: Yes, it had a distinctive style.

EISNER: You agree, then, you were aware of a distinct identity, or character, that came out in the product of both your efforts. I know it's hard to see oneself in perspective...but in the output of your contemporaries, that's the place where you can detect evidence of it.

KIRBY: That's right.

EISNER: Do you think Joe changed his style of drawing to accommodate your penciling, or did you find him making alterations in your penciling within the frame of his own ability.

KIRBY: Joe never had time to make alterations. It sounds like a tailor shop.

EISNER: In reality, we were like factories in those days.

KIRBY: We were factories and we were turning out products thick and fast because they wanted books rapidly and steadily. They were all selling very well. Ours sold, I know, extremely well.

EISNER: I understand from Joe that yours were No. 2 and 3 in the field.

KIRBY: Oh, we certainly were when superheroes came upon the field. Our first superheroes were the heroes of Myth.

EISNER: What was the first superhero you ever did?

KIRBY: *Captain America*.

EISNER: Who did you do that for?

KIRBY: For Atlas, Martin Goodman.

EISNER: Martin Goodman, that was the Martin Goodman?

KIRBY: Yes, Atlas was not yet Marvel. Stan Lee was not even on the scene yet. He came on later; he was a young fellow. I remember him sitting on my desk and playing the flute, interfering with my work.

EISNER: Is that right? Joe Simon said he had hired him as a kid in the office.

KIRBY: Yeah, he was a kid in the office. I remember being serious about what I was working on and Stan was never serious about anything. I think that's right, because young people usually aren't.

EISNER: Well, let's get back to *Captain America*. There again, the same formula, the same modus operandi. You wrote and Joe inked, supported you, lettered and so forth. Did he ever do any penciling at all where you inked on his pencil?

KIRBY: No, not at all.

EISNER: Okay, I just wanted to be sure.

KIRBY: I inked sporadically. I inked when I felt my inking was needed. Joe never stopped me. I thought sometimes it didn't look elaborate enough. I felt that the double spread should have had a little more impact, should be a little bolder, so I would ink over the inks that were on it already. Joe let me have my way and it was very effective.

EISNER: The relationship between you two was more of a business partnership rather than a literary partnership, right?

KIRBY: It was a business partnership really.

EISNER: There wasn't too much intellectualism or soul-searching going on.

KIRBY: It couldn't have been because Joe would not ordinarily socialize with a guy like me and I couldn't find people to socialize with [laughter]. That's exactly like it was. Sure, if I was 6'3" I would never socialize with a street kid who was 5'4". Okay. And if I was in 6th grade, I would never socialize with a kid who was in 2nd grade. Okay.

EISNER: I'm glad you weren't my big brother. You would have been a tough big brother, you dirty, no good...[trails to laugh]...

KIRBY: Well, somehow we found ground in which we needed each other and I felt that was great.

EISNER: Joe mentioned that out on Long Island you lived very close to each other.

KIRBY: Oh, eventually. I'm talking about the very beginnings. Later on, I got closer. I began to intellectualize on my own. I began to climb on my own. I began to analyze not only relationships but products and myself.

EISNER: Well, that's a very important part of what I was trying to probe when I was exploring the "intellectual mix." Iger and I had little intellectual mix. Our age difference and our philosophy of life...even our goals were different. He was all business! There was no chance to intellectualize. Later on, working with artists in the shop—like Lou Fine—I could intellectualize a little bit. He was my peer, so we could talk. Out of that comes a kind of mind expansion that appears ultimately in the work. It's a kind of input to product from heightened sensitivities. You try to show yourself as a tough guy, Jack, but I wonder...maybe inside there's a softer nice guy fighting to get out [laughs].

KIRBY: I really was a tough guy. It could have gone either way with me in my early days. I think what turned me off was that I had a friend of mine who was shot and I saw his mother grieve over that. I saw his father gamble away the the week's work and I saw his mother jump off the roof.

EISNER: [Groan] Oh, that's terrible. That leaves its mark on you. Let's get back to this, you working on *Captain America* and the same formula or method of product operation is occurring. You did the writing and penciling and Joe is inking and lettering and handling the relationships with the client.

KIRBY: Yes, but what we didn't know was that we were doing an updated *Uncle Sam*. He was no longer wearing a frock coat. He no longer had a beard. *Uncle Sam* was a super acrobat who could tackle 10 guys, which is something I always fantasized about. I choreographed. I was no longer a street fighter, I was a



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KIRBY: I never deviated from that.

EISNER: I just wondered about that, whether that stuck with you [laugh].

KIRBY: I never deviate from a role model. It works, it will work for anybody. I think that's where it begins.

EISNER: As a matter of fact, it changed later when you were with Marvel and Stan Lee...but I'll get into that later. I want to create a picture here of this operation. So you roughed out the action and you did the balloons, and then you started penciling. I remember your penciling as being fairly tight. At least in my shop it was tight enough so that anybody who was skillful could ink on it.

KIRBY: My pencils were meticulous.

EISNER: Good. So Joe would then come in and ink over it.

KIRBY: Yes, Joe would ink over that.

EISNER: And in order to get stuff out you would be penciling another story while he was inking the first, I gather.

KIRBY: That's right! And we'd get stuff done that fast. There was one time when we worked at DC that they sent us a script and we threw it out.

EISNER: Is that right? Very good!

KIRBY: That didn't win us any friends, but we got the script over that very afternoon. We became known as the fastest men in the field because we learned how to turn out the fastest product.

EISNER: Well, in that connection, I was recently discussing that in an interview with Joe Simon. There are very few teams, like yours and Joe's. Of course, Siegel and Shuster, but the next classic combination that I can remember is you and Joe. You're both part of comic book art history. Which is easy to say, because even my elevator man claims to be part of transportation history [laugh]...not to demean you...

KIRBY: No, I demean nobody. In fact, I have admiration for the ordinary guy.

EISNER: All right, anyway, let's get back to this because I don't want to lose the thread. That partnership developed into a team and that team had an impact on the field. In the process, you turned out a product that had an identity all its own.

KIRBY: Yes, it had a distinctive style.

EISNER: You agree, then, you were aware of a distinct identity, or character, that came out in the product of both your efforts. I know it's hard to see oneself in perspective...but in the output of your contemporaries, that's the place where you can detect evidence of it.

KIRBY: That's right.

EISNER: Do you think Joe changed his style of drawing to accommodate your penciling, or did you find him making alterations in your penciling within the frame of his own ability.

KIRBY: Joe never had time to make alterations. It sounds like a tailor shop.

EISNER: In reality, we were like factories in those days.

KIRBY: We were factories and we were turning out products thick and fast because they wanted books rapidly and steadily. They were all selling very well. Ours sold, I know, extremely well.

EISNER: I understand from Joe that yours were No. 2 and 3 in the field.

KIRBY: Oh, we certainly were when superheroes came upon the field. Our first superheroes were the heroes of Myth.

EISNER: What was the first superhero you ever did?

KIRBY: *Captain America*.

EISNER: Who did you do that for?

KIRBY: For Atlas, Martin Goodman.

EISNER: Martin Goodman, that was the Martin Goodman?

KIRBY: Yes, Atlas was not yet, Marvel, Stan Lee was not even on the scene yet. He came on later; he was a young fellow. I remember him sitting on my desk and playing the flute, interfering with my work.

EISNER: Is that right? Joe Simon said he had hired him as a kid in the office.

KIRBY: Yeah, he was a kid in the office. I remember being serious about what I was working on and Stan was never serious about anything. I think that's right, because young people usually aren't.

EISNER: Well, let's get back to *Captain America*. There again, the same formula, the same modus operandi. You wrote and Joe inked, supported you, lettered and so forth. Did he ever do any penciling at all where you inked on his pencil?

KIRBY: No, not at all.

EISNER: Okay, I just wanted to be sure. KIRBY: I inked sporadically. I inked when I felt my inking was needed. Joe never stopped me. I thought sometimes it didn't look elaborate enough. I felt that the double spread should have had a little more impact, should be a little bolder, so I would ink over the inks that were on it already. Joe let me have my way and it was very effective.

EISNER: The relationship between you two was more of a business partnership rather than a literary partnership, right?

KIRBY: It was a business partnership really.

EISNER: There wasn't too much intellectualism or soul-searching going on.

KIRBY: It couldn't have been because Joe would not ordinarily socialize with a guy like me and I couldn't find people to socialize with [laughter]. That's exactly like it was. Sure, if I was 6'3" I would never socialize with a street kid who was 5'4". Okay. And if I was in 6th grade, I would never socialize with a kid who was in 2nd grade. Okay.

EISNER: I'm glad you weren't my big brother. You would have been a tough big brother, you dirty, no good...[trails to laugh]...

KIRBY: Well, somehow we found ground in which we needed each other and I felt that was great.

EISNER: Joe mentioned that out on Long Island you lived very close to each other.

KIRBY: Oh, eventually. I'm talking about the very beginnings. Later on, I got closer. I began to intellectualize on my own. I began to climb on my own. I began to analyze not only relationships, but products and myself.

EISNER: Well, that's a very important part of what I was trying to probe when I was exploring the "intellectual mix." Iger and I had little intellectual mix! Our age difference and our philosophy of life...even our goals were different. He was all business! There was no chance to intellectualize. Later on, working with artists in the shop—like Lou Fine—I could intellectualize a little bit. He was my peer, so we could talk. Out of that comes a kind of mind expansion that appears ultimately in the work. It's a kind of input to product from heightened sensitivities. You try to show yourself as a tough guy, Jack, but I wonder...maybe inside there's a softer nice guy fighting to get out [laughs].

KIRBY: I really was a tough guy. It could have gone either way with me in my early days. I think what turned me off was that I had a friend of mine who was shot and I saw his mother grieve over that. I saw his father gamble away the week's work and I saw his mother jump off the roof.

EISNER: [Groan] Oh, that's terrible. That leaves its mark on you. Let's get back to this, you working on *Captain America* and the same formula or method of product operation is occurring. You did the writing and penciling and Joe is inking and lettering and handling the relationships with the client.

KIRBY: Yes, but what we didn't know was that we were doing an updated *Uncle Sam*. He was no longer wearing a frock coat. He no longer had a beard. *Uncle Sam* was a super acrobat who could tackle 10 guys, which is something I always fantasized about. I choreographed. I was no longer a street fighter, I was a



"Lyric violence" as displayed in the battle choreography of Simon and Kirby's *Fighting American* number 1, 1954.

choreographer.

EISNER: Do you agree with Gil Kane, who calls it "lyric violence?"

KIRBY: Yes, I think it's lyric violence. I think there's beauty in violence. Of course, there's ugliness in it but I've done a lot of boxing on my own growing up, and I never tried to fight ugly. I try to fight fair. I try to win fair.

EISNER: So your heroes when they're fighting, were fighting in your mode.

KIRBY: Yes. I felt that if I had to fight 10 guys, I'd find a way to do it.

EISNER: I want to get back to the pages. Were you conscious of a page layout?

Did you evolve a formula or theory at the time, because your stuff began to be very different at that time. In my shop, we were making page layouts in accordance with the story trend, but here you're talking about violence and action.

KIRBY: I suddenly found myself intellectualizing.

EISNER: Good.

KIRBY: I found myself competing with the movie camera. I had to compete with the camera. I felt like John Henry. I did something you might not have done—I tore my characters out of the panels. I made them jump all over the page. I tried to make that cohesive so it could be easier to read. That is very hard. If you had character jumping all over, or reaching out of panels, or...

EISNER: Well, why did you do that sort of violent action? In service to what?

KIRBY: In the service of trying to get a real fight.

EISNER: You wanted to transmit an impact that would sell!

KIRBY: I wanted to transmit the power of people in the ring. I couldn't do that in a static way. It's nothing you can

talk your way out of. It's something that is an extreme form of behavior, and I had to do it in an extreme manner. I drew the hardest positions a character could get into. So I had to get my characters in extreme positions, and in doing so I developed an extreme style which was easily recognizable by everybody. I had no time to put fingernails on fingers. I had no time to tie shoe laces correctly. I had no time to draw styles exactly as they were. I had to fake suits, I had to fake automobiles. I had to fake tanks.

EISNER: You didn't use a "morgue"... a reference file...photographs and so on. Sometimes artists in this field actually photocopy photos and trace them...as backgrounds or...for stark realism and accuracy, I mean.

KIRBY: No. I just made an impression of these things. In other words, I would draw a tank, it would look like a German

or American tank, but that's where it ended.

EISNER: No detail.

KIRBY: No detail. I didn't have time to do it. I didn't think that would sell the book. I would draw it as dramatically as I could. I felt I was a human camera trying to get events as they actually were. I was very sincere about that. I was in that fight, in that situation. The tank didn't matter to me. I was trying to get at the guy who was trying to get at me.

EISNER: So here you were, doing *Captain America*, and it was very successful. Almost an instant success, right?

KIRBY: Yes. I can tell you it reached sales of 900,000.

EISNER: Really? Incredible! Then it was the making of Martin Goodman's shop? Was it his first comic, or did he have comics before this?

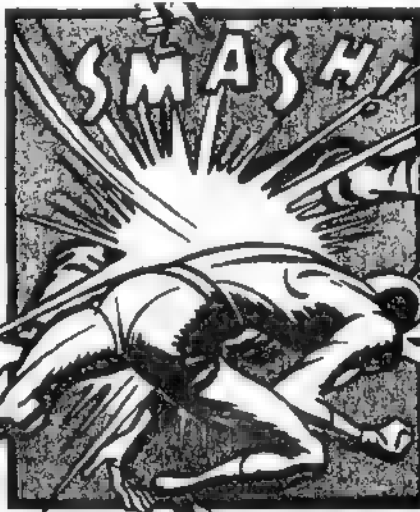
KIRBY: He had comics before, but never one like this. Then I instituted the kid gang comic.

EISNER: Was that your idea?

KIRBY: Yes. I began to remember people from my own background and I began to subtly realize they were important and that I wasn't ashamed of them. I was no longer ashamed of myself, and I began to see them as I should have seen them from the beginning, but wasn't able to. I was enjoying life for the first time.

EISNER: Now at this point you were making money. Were you out on Long Island?

KIRBY: No, no, this is far from Long Island. I was still trying to get into Brooklyn [laughter]. I heard they had a tree there, and the tree was different. Finally, when I did *Captain America*, I



The Guardian transmits an impact. (1942)

...continued on page 37

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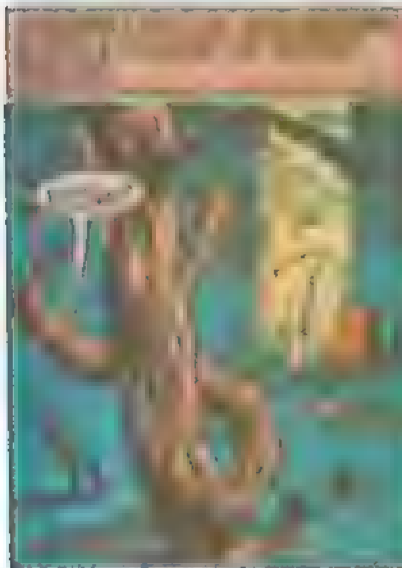
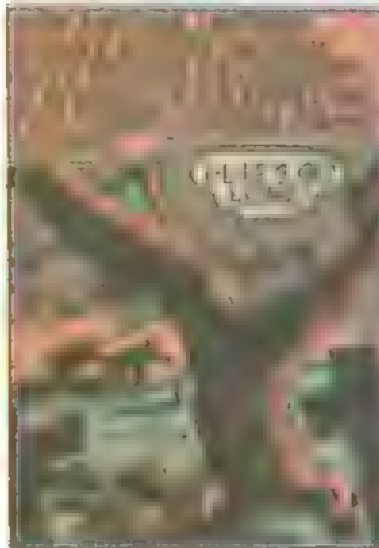
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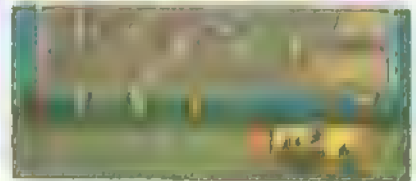
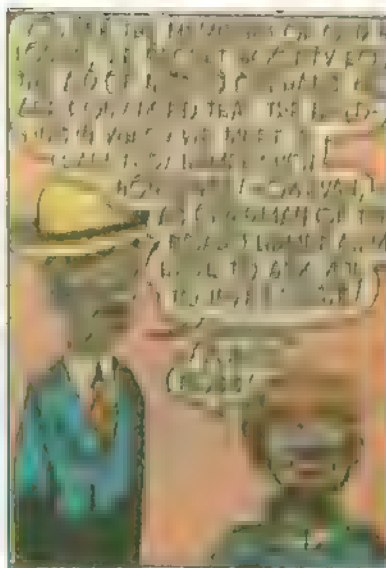
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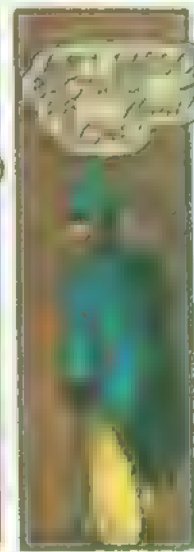
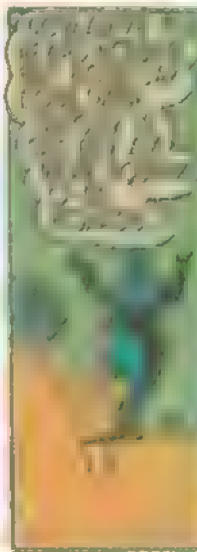
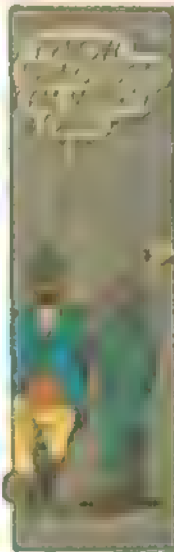
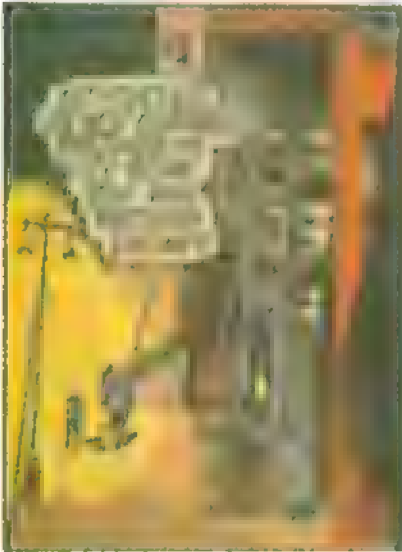
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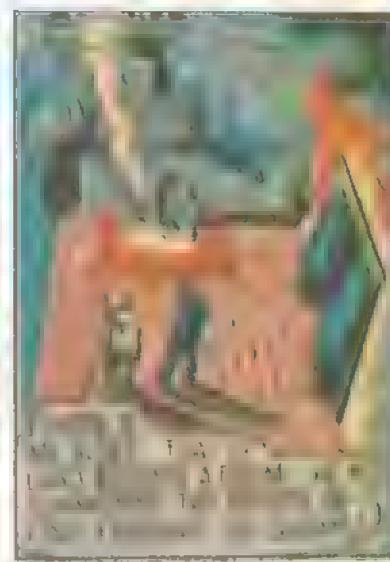
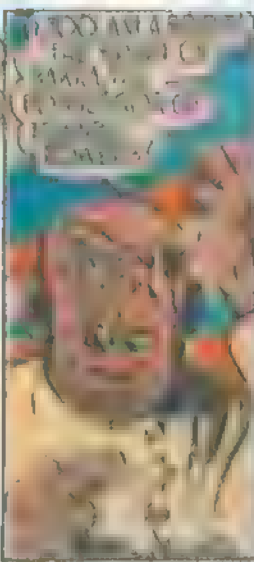
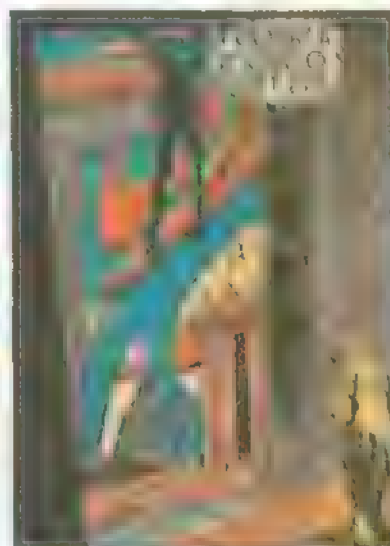
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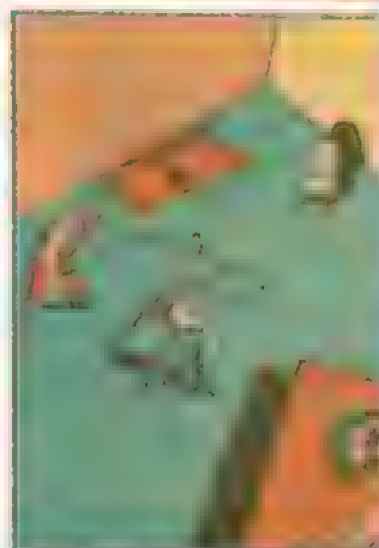
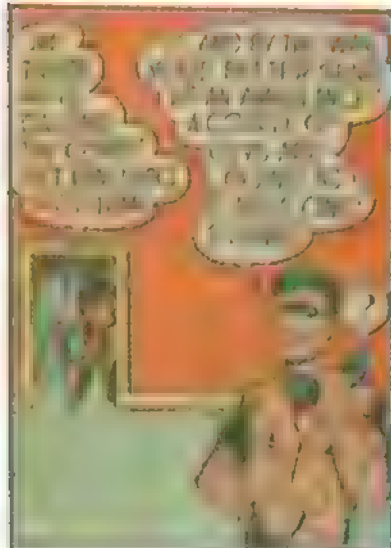


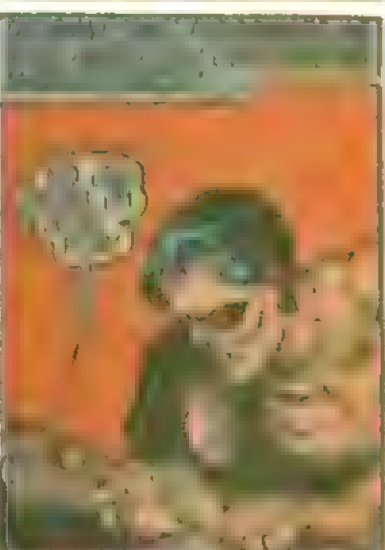
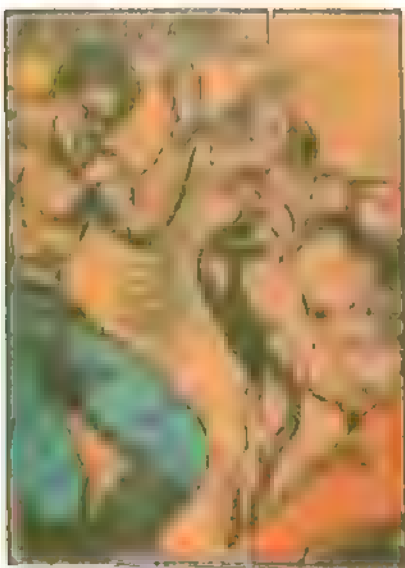












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decided to move to Brooklyn. I didn't even feel my art was involved anymore. I felt my art was a conjunction to my achieving what I wanted to as a personality.

EISNER: As a means to an end.

KIRBY: Yes. I feel that DaVinci was also a means to an end, except that he had a bigger deadline than I had [laughter]. He had a tougher time because they demanded a lot more of him.

EISNER: Well, he was working a different medium. So you developed a line of gang kids.

KIRBY: Yes, I think it was called *The Young Allies*, that was for Atlas and then there was the *Newsboy Legion*.

EISNER: And that worked with the same formula, you were writing, same thing with Joe.

KIRBY: Yes, we worked the same way; it worked successfully and later on we got Howard Ferguson to letter for us. Joe still did the inking and I was still doing the penciling and the stories.

EISNER: You were using a brush then? Students always ask this.

KIRBY: Yes I was using a brush, because it was faster and bolder. I think I used a No. 2

EISNER: It was probably a No. 3, because a No. 2 is smaller.

KIRBY: It was a medium type brush.

EISNER: Do you remember using Japanese brushes in the Eisner-Iger studio?

KIRBY: No, I didn't, because I felt I couldn't handle them.

EISNER: I just wondered, because Lou did and I did...all right...let's get back to the *Newsboy Legion* and so forth.

KIRBY: *Newsboy Legion* became a form of entertainment. I felt that whatever I knew, whatever I saw, whatever I thought, was a form of entertainment, I could communicate that as a form of entertainment.

EISNER: All this time now, you're in Brooklyn, you're moving into the big time...

KIRBY: I'm not only in Brooklyn, but I'm bowling. I'm trying to beat Joe at bowling, which I could never do.

EISNER: [Guffaw]. Terrific.

KIRBY: I'm trying to beat Joe at golf, which I can't do. I'm getting slaughtered socially. [Laugh] I knew there was something that I'd missed, and that was bowling, golfing, and horseback riding.

EISNER: You tried horseback riding?

KIRBY: Yes. Joe and I, of course, became friends. You've got to become friends after such a relationship. And we became friends with Artie Goodman, one of the Goodman brothers. We became friends with Arthur Weiss, who represented the engraving shop, and they all went horseback riding. Of course, I had to do the same thing. I can tell you that I rode my behind raw [chuckle]. I can tell you sincerely that I spent one week drawing standing up,

because my behind was in a very raw condition.

EISNER: Ahhh, I love that story. Wonderful memories [laughter].

KIRBY: It was a form of class for me, something I had to do.

EISNER: This was when; the '50s?

KIRBY: Oh, no, no. This was 1942.

EISNER: World War II was starting.

KIRBY: Yes. Hitler was a disappointed artist. He went into other things [both laugh]. Although those were scary times, we were having a great time, dating girls. I was already dating my wife, who I met in Brooklyn. I moved into a two story house and her family moved into the second floor, and it was the greatest date I ever had because I never had to pay for her car fare. Just taking her out...and she was a lovely girl and still is. I'm always going to love her and care for her and be her best friend. The war came, I got drafted, we all went into the service. Joe rode horseback and tried to stop the guys infiltrating on rafts. He was in the Coast Guard. I was in the Army.

EISNER: Infantry?

KIRBY: Infantry. I wound up in the Third Army with General Patton. I became a runner and I got into one "worst hole" after another, and I turned myself off. I decided to become stupid. I figured if I was going to survive, and get out alive, that was what was going to do it. It's not to intellectualize it or to be careful. Just still do the same thing that you've always done. Just be yourself and not give a damn about anything else. That's what I did.

EISNER: So you used your street smarts to survive.

KIRBY: I was a street kid, and I was never going to be anything else. I don't think the Germans were ready for that.

EISNER: So you didn't do any artwork during the War.

KIRBY: I did one cover which DC sent me.

EISNER: I mean for the Army, not for back home.

KIRBY: No, I couldn't get into *Yank*. I tried, but I had a sergeant from Texas, who said, "Boy, I know what you're here for, and you're not going to get the papers, and you're not going to get orders."

EISNER: I remember that all too well! Son of a bitch! [deprecating laughter].

KIRBY: "...I know you want to get into OCS [Officer Candidate School], but you're not going to. You're going to be infantry!" and of course, I was. The only one who took me seriously was my Lieutenant. He says, "Kirby, you drew *Captain America*," he says, "you're an artist." I said, "Yes, I'm that kind of artist." He says, "Well, here's a map [chuckle]. Take the map. We're both going across the river tonight." The Mosel River, this was, outside Metz. He says, "when you see a Tiger Tank, you put a cross where it's been." [Laughter] He says, "We're trying to find these tanks." And of course, that's what I did.

EISNER: Wow! [Laughter]. That's the "Army way" of using your artwork.

KIRBY: Winter was getting more severe, and we were all frozen out, and we went home. When I was in the hospital, that's when the guys from DC came in.

EISNER: Were you in a hospital in the States or over in Europe?

KIRBY: No, no, in Europe.

EISNER: You were a casualty then.

KIRBY: Oh, I had a 100% disability. My legs were a deep purple.

EISNER: My God!

KIRBY: They didn't know what to do for purple feet. They just let them get red and pink so I was in the hospital and the boys from DC came in. There was Eddie Harem and Murry Boltinoff. They said, "We're in Paris, and we're having a great time. We want to get you on *Yank* magazine. If you're on the magazine, we'll all be together and have a great time in Paris." I told them to get the hell out of my room. They said, "Why, don't you want to have a good time?" I said "No, I want to go home. They don't know what to do for frozen feet." I figured I was on my way home, and I was right. I went to



Kirby's war experiences were illustrated in letters to his wife. (1944)



From 1959 to 1963 Kirby delivered a wild array of aliens, mutants, demons and nightmares to Martin Goodman's monster titles.

England and then back to the States. I was the first one to come out and I went back to doing the *Boy Commandos*. When Joe came out, we decided to work with Al Harvey Publications. From Al Harvey, we did the same things we'd always done. We went from one place to another doing the same routine.

EISNER: You writing and penciling, he inking and lettering.

KIRBY: And getting better deals all the time. I can say that we were the first to get percentages.

EISNER: Who did you get a percentage from, Harvey?

KIRBY: Crestwood, Mike Blier, and Teddy Epstein. Then somehow things got slow in the '50s. We separated. Joe and I separated.

EISNER: Was it because business was so slow, or...

KIRBY: Not only because things went slow, but because Dr. [Frederic] Wertham [author of *Seduction of the Innocent*, a book against comics] was at his height at the time. Comics in general were not as highly regarded, and the atmosphere of the '50s was not conducive to selling comics. People were getting out of them, I recall. Leonard Starr, who now does *Little Orphan Annie*, left at that time. Johnny Prentice, who does *Rip Kirby* now and is doing a fine job, he left the field. I stayed in it. Joe left the field. Nelson Rockefeller was running for governor at that time.

EISNER: I didn't know that. What was Joe doing for the Rockefeller campaign, public relations material?

KIRBY: He was on a staff doing promotion work. Joe had friends on the staff and he gravitated to that. I stayed in the comics and went back to Marvel. Okay, I came back to Marvel there. It was a sad day. I came back the afternoon they were going to close up. Stan Lee was already the editor there and things were in a bad way. I remember telling him not to close because I had some ideas.

What had been done before, I felt, could be done again. I think it was the time when I really began to grow. I was married. I was a man with three children, obligations.

EISNER: Sounds like you were taking on a more professional manner.

KIRBY: I was a professional, a thorough professional. I knew damn well what I was doing. I knew what the superstructure of the field was and I knew a little more about business, not as much as I should have known. I felt I had to regenerate things. I began to build a new line of superheroes.

EISNER: So the ideas for superheroes at Marvel and DC were ideas cooked up by you and Stan.

KIRBY: No. That was cooked up by me! *Spider-Man* was discussed between Joe and myself. *Spider-Man* was not a product of Marvel.

EISNER: You mean *Spider-Man* was cooked up between you and Joe Simon, and you brought it to Stan.

KIRBY: That's right. It was the last thing Joe and I had discussed. We had a strip called the, or a script called *The Silver Spider*. *The Silver Spider* was going into a magazine called *Black Magic*. *Black Magic* folded with Crestwood and we were left with the script. I believe I said this could become a thing called *Spider-Man*, see, a superhero character. I had a lot of faith in the superhero character, that they could be brought back, very, very vigorously. They weren't being done at the time. I felt they could regenerate and I said *Spider-Man* would be a fine character to start with. But Joe had already moved on. So the idea was already there when I talked to Stan.

EISNER: So you did the first one all by yourself, then.

KIRBY: Oh, yes. *Spider-Man* wasn't the first one I did. I began to do monster books. The kind of books Goodman wanted. I had to fight for the superheroes. In other words, I was at the stage

now where I had to fight for those things and I did. I had to regenerate the entire line. I felt that there was nobody there that was qualified to do it. So I began to do it. Stan Lee was my vehicle to do it. He was my bridge to Martin [Goodman].

EISNER: I take it that he believed in what you had to say.

KIRBY: Stan Lee always believed in what I had to say. I know Stan Lee better than any man. Stan Lee had a lot of faith in me. He knew I'd been successful in the past and he knew I'd be successful now. Stan was my bridge between myself and Martin.

EISNER: In the stuff that you worked on with Stan, was he writing at the time?

KIRBY: No. Stan Lee was not writing. I was doing the writing. It all came from my basement and I can tell you that if I ever began to intellectualize, it was then.

EISNER: What do you mean by intellectualize?

KIRBY: Well, I was more mature now. My characters were more mature and that made them different. I didn't realize I was building a college audience. When I created the *Hulk*, they wanted to discontinue it after three issues. What saved me was the fact that some Columbia students came up to Marvel, and they had along a whole list of names. They said the *Hulk* was the mascot of their dormitory. It was the first time I realized we had a college audience. I told everybody at Marvel not to discontinue this book. I said a book needs time to mature, just like people.

EISNER: Really, it was your perception...

KIRBY: Oh, yes, I fought against that.

EISNER: When you say 'intellectualize,' I'm fascinated. I want to see if we can probe that definition. I don't want to put words in your mouth, but...

KIRBY: No, I began to define characters.

EISNER: Give me an example.

KIRBY: Okay, I'll give you Doctor

THE MASSIVE CONCRETE DOOR CLOSES BEHIND BRUCE BANNER AT THE EXACT MOMENT THAT EVENING BEGINS ON THE SURFACE! THEN, JUST AS IT HAS HAPPENED SO MANY TIMES BEFORE...



...A STARTLING **CHANGE** COMES OVER THE MILD, SCHOLARLY SCIENTIST...



...AND BEHOLD--THE **HULK!!!**



Kirby created the Hulk by combining the elements of classical literature with monster comics, atomic accidents and the Cold War.

Doom, who is one of my characters. Dr. Doom is a handsome guy....But first, I began with the classics that were very powerful. What comics were doing all the time was updating the classics. So, I borrowed from *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. I felt there was a Mr. Hyde in all of us and that was a character I wanted and I called him the Hulk. In the legend of Thor, I began to update Thor. I felt that Thor needed friends, so I went to the *Four Musketeers*, and that was the basis.

EISNER: Is that what you mean by intellectualization?

KIRBY: I began to feel that people had problems. One man needed friends. The Hulk was misunderstood by people. He was a schizophrenic. He was misunderstood. He became Dr. Bruce Banner at one point, an intellectual and then he became a primitive at another point. I was updating *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Bruce Banner was a physicist. He was no longer a doctor. And, I did that with the others. I began to realize that I knew about people. Dr. Doom was a perfectionist. Dr. Doom was a handsome guy and he had to hide his face in a steel mask because he had

a scratch on his face. He couldn't stand that scratch.

EISNER: So you were applying psychology or a human understanding, for you...a new dimension...right?

KIRBY: Yes, I began to learn that I knew people. I finally began to know the other guy. When I began to learn that I knew the other guy, then I began my best work.

EISNER: Now, we're coming to the point where Marvel or Stan Lee is listening to your advice, or your driving push, for a better approach to comics, which



Doctor Doom was the ultimate perfectionist who was victim of his own phobia as well as arch-enemy to all the other Marvel characters.



A 1969 self-portrait of Jack Kirby at the drawing board with the

Marvel Comics characters he created.

did with Joe Simon. I conceptualize the story, I write the story, I conceptualize the characters. I put the elements into the thing that will sell.

EISNER: What about this *Captain Victory*? Someone told me you developed a new comic book.

KIRBY: *Captain Victory* is my answer to Steven Spielberg, who I feel is a very nice guy, extremely nice guy, who feels that nice things are going to happen to him.

I'm more of a realist. I know that whoever is out in space there is going to be like us, and we're going to have to give as good as we get.

EISNER: What's *Captain Victory* about?

KIRBY: *Captain Victory* is a story about life. Captain Victory knows that to win, you've got to sacrifice. If you win, you're the one that goes on. And if you go on, all you have is tribulation.

EISNER: How much of *Captain Victory*

are you doing? Once again the writing and the penciling? Someone else doing the inking?

KIRBY: Same formula. I've never stopped doing that. That's the way in life I've always worked. I've more or less written my own script. I believe you've done the same thing.

EISNER: Yes; all right, Jack. I believe we can end it right here. Thanks.

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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1946

THE



SPIRIT

BY
**Will
EISNER**

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NO?

Well, watch this, pal.....











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NO THERE AIN'T! WEEVIL IS SELLING THE ICE IN A FEW MINUTES! JUST KEEP YOUR EYE ON 'EM... DOPE!!



DOPE, EH?? MUMBLE MUMBLE EH??



OW!



OH, WISE GUYS, EH? I'LL SHOW 'EM!



...AND NOW, GENTLEMEN, ENOUGH THE VAN GAULL DIAMONDS! FOR CONVENIENCE I HAVE REMOVED 'EM FROM THEIR SETTINGS...

THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY! I'LL TAKE THEM!

...AND NOW, GENTLEMEN, ENOUGH THE VAN GAULL DIAMONDS! FOR CONVENIENCE I HAVE REMOVED 'EM FROM THEIR SETTINGS...



SEZ YOU, BABE!!



DO SOMETHING, SPIRIT!! WHY D'YOU THINK I BROUGHT YOU ALONG?

I CAN'T! YOU HAND-CUFFED ME SO I'D BE AT YOUR MERCY, REMEMBER?







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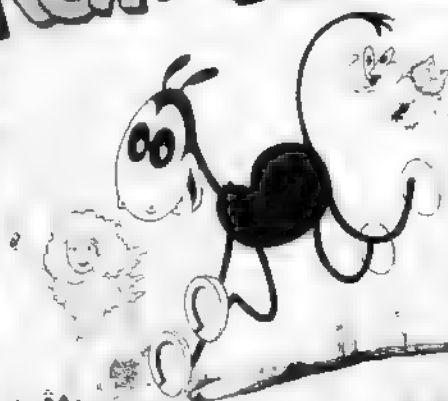
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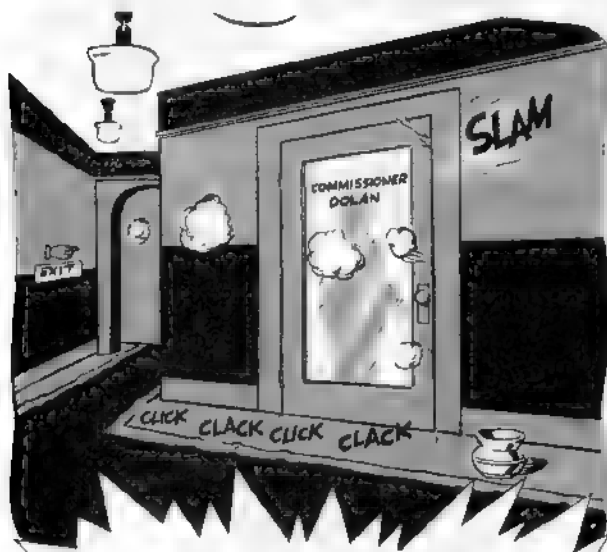
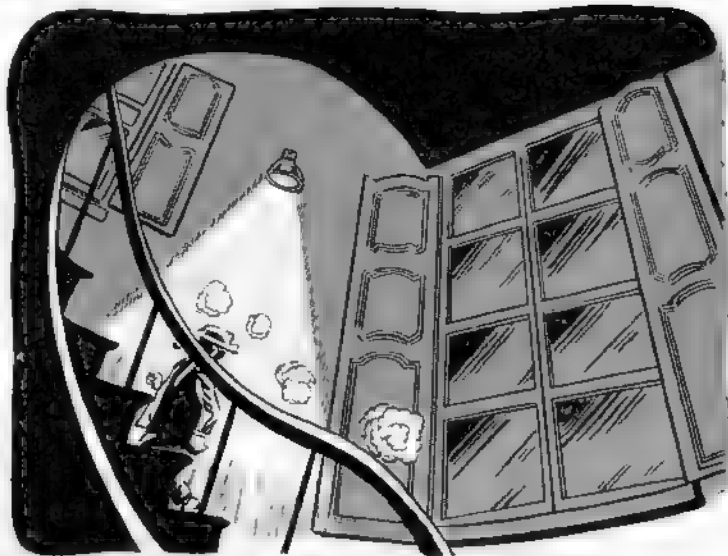
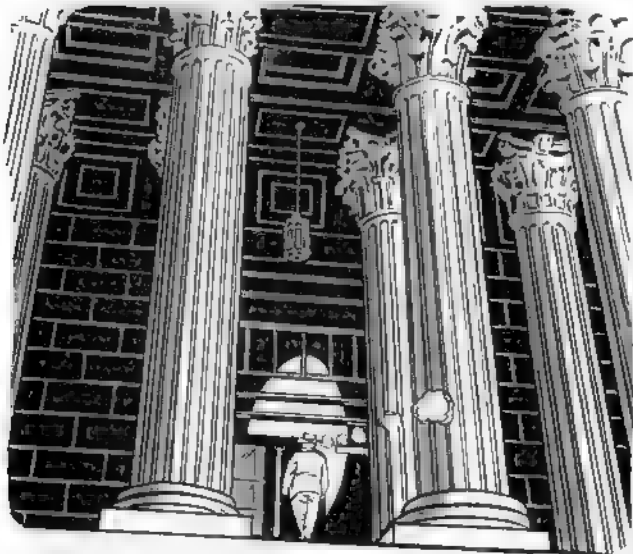
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Veta Barra

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED JULY 29, 1951



CITY HALL IS IN A **TURMOIL**! ALL OFFICIALS HAVE **REFUSED** COMMENT! THE WHEREABOUTS OF COMMISSIONER DOLAN IS **UNKNOWN**—~~MAN~~ ALL THAT IS KNOWN AT THE MOMENT IS THAT ONE HALF HOUR AGO **COMMISSIONER DOLAN** **RESIGNED** AND EVERY-ONE IS ASKING **WHY?**





NOW THAT IT IS ALL OVER I'M **NOT SURE** I KNOW! MY **MEMORY** KEEPS SLIDING LIKE AN ESCALATOR! I'M **NOT EVEN CERTAIN** **HOW** IT BEGAN, *from* OH, YES...IT WAS **THAT PHONE CALL!**



DOLAN SPEAKING!

COMMISSIONER DOLAN...THIS IS **VETA BARRA!** I WOULD LIKE TO REPORT A **MURDER!** I HAVE JUST **KILLED** MY HUSBAND!

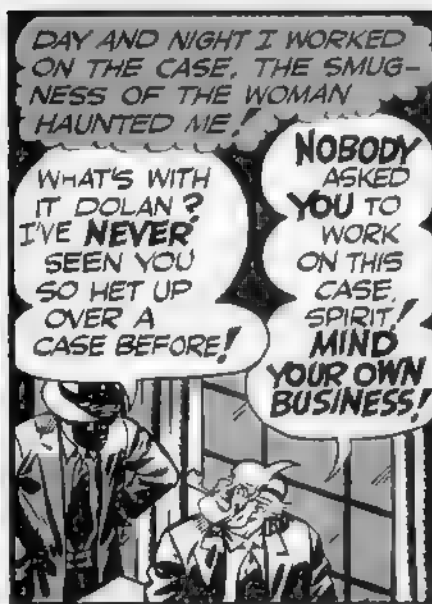
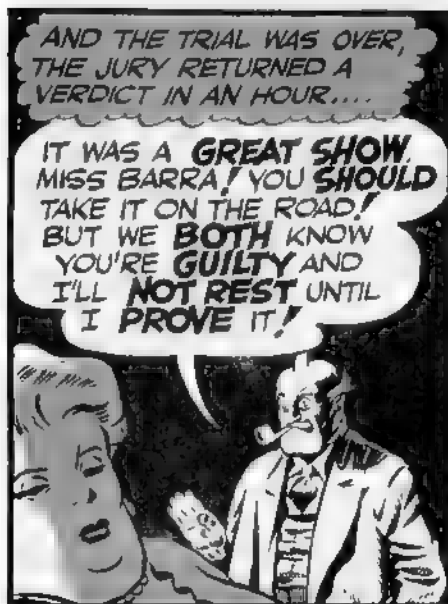
VETA BARRA, THE GREAT STAR OF SILENT FILMS, A LITTLE OLDER PERHAPS, BUT MINUS NONE OF HER MANY CHARMS...

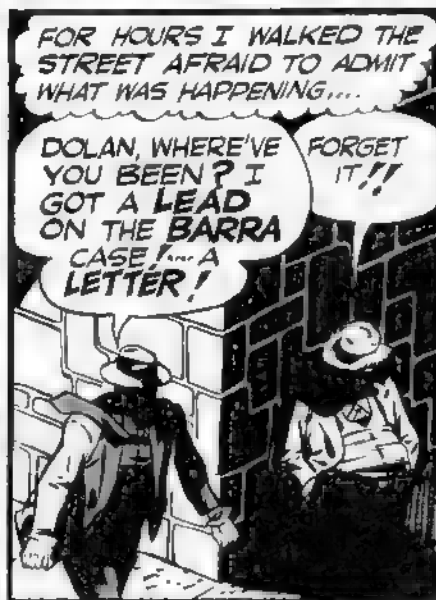
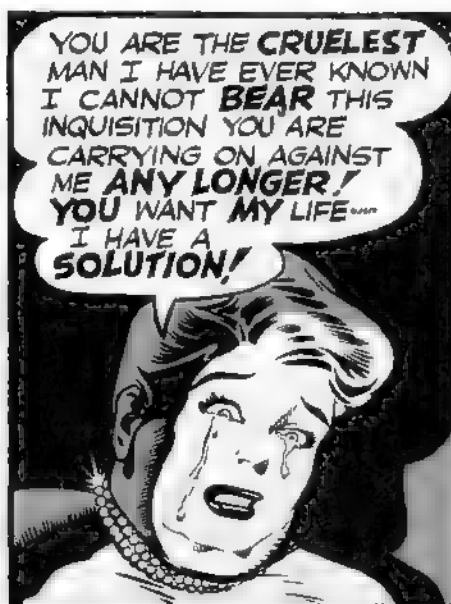
YOU **MUST BELIEVE ME!** IT WAS SELF DEFENSE! **HOW CAN I TELL YOU HOW RALPH TORTURED ME!**

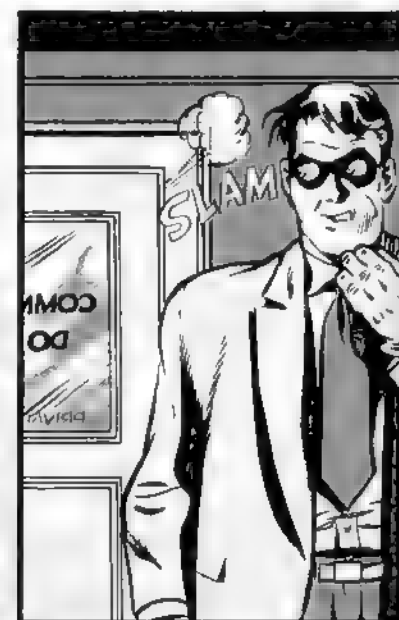
THEN THAT LAST NIGHT WHEN HE CAME AT ME WITH A **CARVING KNIFE!** **WHAT COULD I DO?**

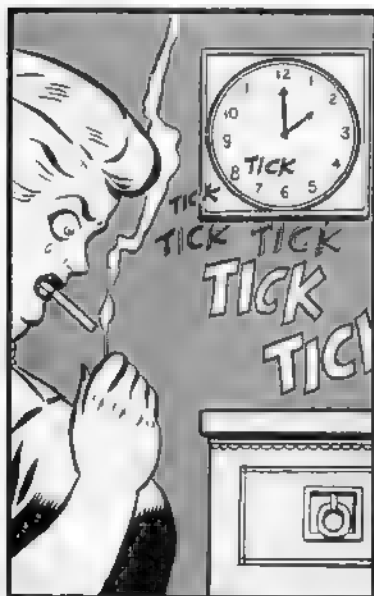
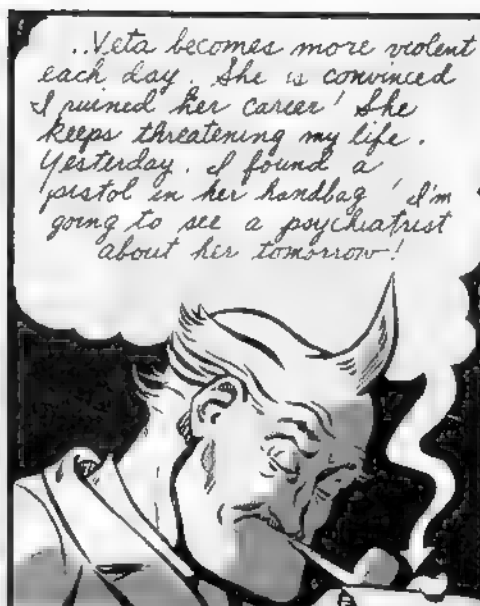
WHERE ARE YOU GOING, DOLAN?

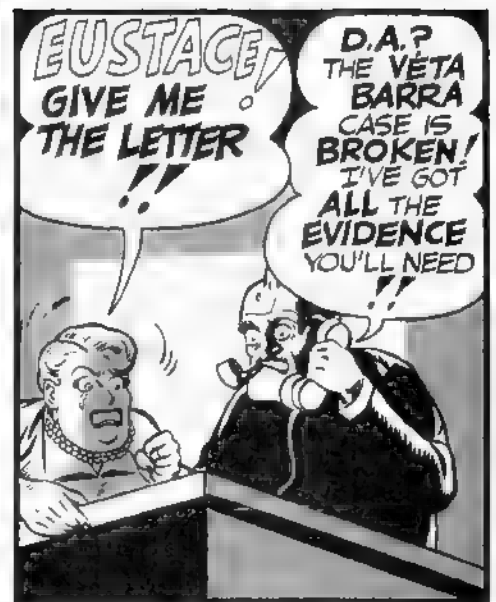
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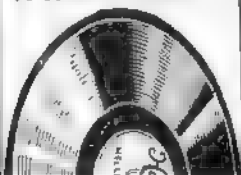
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GET WELL PHIL!

The entire staff of *The Spirit* wishes a speedy recovery to the original guiding force in comics fandom!

Will

Deuts

Holly

Peter

cat

Ray

Doreen

Goss

Bob

LETTERS

COMPLAINTS

I'll make this brief. I have great respect for the work of Mr. Eisner, but the name of the magazine is *Spirit Magazine*. I do not pay \$3.50 [Canadian dollars] to see Mr. Eisner's latest work or to read interviews. Rather, I want to read *The Spirit*! Issue No.37 is the last straw. Only three stories, and one in poor color yet!

I will not buy *Spirit Magazine* again unless there is at least five *Spirit* stories in each issue

D. Larry Hancock
45 Dunfield, Apt 1419, Toronto M4S 2H4

COMPLAINTS

"More Spirit, Less Articles." "Too Much Non-Spirit Stuff." These were headlines over letters to the editor in *Spirit* No.36. I agree with both letters!

Larry J. Adler
324 E. 74th street, New York, NY 10021

COMPLAINTS

Maybe I'm in the minority, but I for one would like to see you go back to re-printing more of *The Spirit*. Otherwise maybe *The Spirit Magazine* should be renamed simply *Will Eisner Magazine*.

Don't get me wrong. I like Will's stuff, whether *Spirit* or not, but to reduce *The Spirit* to just three reprints seems to be going too far! Put more *Spirit* into *The Spirit*!

Doug Martin
no address

COMPLAINTS

Re: *The Spirit* No.37. A mere three *Spirit* reprints? Far too few, friends. And the color reprint isn't "muted." It's blurred, off-register and unreadable. At \$2.95 a pop, your magazine is turning into an expensive vanity. You could've dropped "Windows" or "Shop Talk" and given us more of *The Spirit*.

M. Rensier
New York City

COMPLAINTS

The new color section really sucks. It's very, very bad. Just plain God-awful. It couldn't be worse. Am I getting my point across?

I know that your intentions are good and I know the problems you are faced with the original color sections. Either go through the awful process of re-coloring these stories or else print them in black & white.

There isn't enough *Spirit* in *Spirit* No. 37 either. Sorry, but the text sections must go! They're just not as interesting or as valuable as *Spirit* stories would be. And although I hate to say it, I think there should be just a little less of Eisner's new art. I'm not calling for an end to it by any means, just a little less of it. Basically, I just want more *Spirit*.

Jam Leonard
75 Mirable Ave., Mill Valley, CA 94941

AND MORE COMPLAINTS

I buy *The Spirit Magazine* for only one reason: I like to read *Spirit* stories! But, I ask you, how can I afford to spend a dollar on each individual story? Today I received No.37 and it only contained three *Spirit* stories! Next you'll just retitle the magazine *Will Eisner's Magazine* and include on the cover, in very small letters, "With The Spirit."

I really like *The Spirit*. He's humorous, he's tragic, he's tough, but he's also sympathetic. He's a very human hero. All I want is to see more of his stories. Whether or not I renew my subscription depends a great deal on what you decide to do with the next few issues.

Jerry L. Ray
Box 24, Dieterich, IL 62424

It is a rare issue of *THE SPIRIT* that will contain as few as three reprint stories. Issue No.38 contained five stories and the issue you hold has five as well. The color in No.37 was poor, we agree, and we have taken steps to improve the quality of the color section dramatically. We hope the color section in this issue meets your approval. We are considering other ways to further improve the color. The text pieces and the new Eisner art are integral to the magazine and will remain. —Editor

CEREBUS CREATOR WRITES

Just for the sake of balance, and since letters in recent issues haven't reflected my viewpoint for the last while, I thought it might be time to write a few comments on Will Eisner's magazine.

As soon as the new copy of *The Spirit* arrives in the mail, I flip to the new material and devour it in one gulp. Then I flip to the text pages and devour them in one gulp. "Shop Talk" has been my favorite text feature, with the Joe Simon chat in the last issue a favorite of mine. Two comic book creators who have seen all that history from slightly different angles comparing notes all these years later! I wish it could have been three times as long. I then read "Dept. of Loose Ends" in the hopes of finding a few more traces of insight into the "Golden Age" and the unique Eisner vantage point on it.

As for old *Spirit* stories, Well, they're quaint I guess. They pale in comparison to the mature viewpoint expressed in the new material. Why not dump the reprints and change the title to *Eisner Unchained*?

Dave Sim
Aardvark-Vanahelm, Inc.
Box 1674, Kitchener, Ontario N2G 4R2

ENGEL UPHOLDS OUR HONOR

Your magazine continues to be one of the most interesting comic-related purchases I make each month.

One thing about it that bugs me, however, are the regular appearances (seem to be at least one or two an issue) of letters from readers who complain, "When I spend my three bucks, I want three bucks worth of *The Spirit*, not one *Spirit* adventure and 45 pages of Will Eisner exploring drainpipes or dirty underwear on the line,

...continued on next page

etc. etc."

These same people then go on to say how they consider Mr. Eisner the greatest comic genius of all time, and how the *Spirit* stories are the world's greatest masterpieces and on and on.

Well, simple logic tells us that there is a finite number of *Spirit* stories, and to reprint them one and all as fast as humanly possible would either seriously shorten the magazine's life, or put an enormous burden on Will to draw that many more drainpipes and clotheslines.

Secondly, if for one do not understand the attitude of someone who claims to be so interested in an artist's work, but can't stand to hear about the man's views, memories or techniques, and doesn't want to see any of his current work either.

The other thing is this attitude about the price. If *The Spirit* is the great masterpiece these people claim to think it is, is three bucks too much for an issue containing a mere three *Spirit* stories?

I am by no means wealthy (though I could be if everyone reading this would buy 4 or 5 copies of *Fandom Confidential*!) But I don't find even an average buck apiece that steep for a *Spirit* story. (Of course they cost me much less than that since I put value on the rest of the contents). I certainly cannot afford the prices charged by the old comic peddler for the originals.

Now that I've defended your honor, permit me to jump on what I predict may be a bandwagon and offer my complaints

about your new color section.

I understand that you are reprinting stories for which no original art exists, but must the registration of the color be so bad? (And I mean your registration, not the registration on the originals you are shooting). If you figure out the answer to that, send it along to the publishers of the *Smithsonian Book of Comic Book Comics*, 'cause I have a feeling they've probably heard the same question.



Fanboys in Bondage

If I had my way, you guys would do this: reprint the strips for which no original art exists in black & white. Those old *Spirit* "Bags" looked okay. I'd rather see

that than the color as it has appeared so far. Then for your color section, use stories for which art does exist and then have it colored. By colored, I mean *comic book* color; regular old 4-color, but on that nice stock you're using.

This mania for painting comic books (at least in this country) seems only to yield disappointing purple and green John Buscema elves, gray and mud-red Barks ducks and (sorry) garish and sloppy *Spirits*.

I personally prefer the look of *Marvel Fanfare* to *Weirdworld* and I think Harvey's "10 Minutes" was much more effective than the color album version.

I will close on a positive note. *The Art of Will Eisner* book is fantastic! Design, layout, color, text and bindings are all first rate. It's great to have all that great (and rare) material so beautifully packaged in one volume. Of particular interest to me are the reproductions of Eisner's pencils and the alternate versions of *Spirit* Magazine covers.

And, finally, thanks to Will for (finally) interviewing Joe Simon! "Shop Talk" is my favorite of the magazine's "new" features, and that was the most interesting talk to date! I'm looking forward to the Jack Kirby installment (if only 'cause I hope he'll explain Simon's throwaway comment about a lawsuit over ownership of Captain America!)

Jim Engel

522 S. Craig Place, Lombard, IL 60146

...continued on page 62

JOURNALS

with *Wolverine MacAlistaire*

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Have you ever dreamed of finding a never before published Will Eisner comic book from 1948?

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is 1948 vintage Eisner featuring Detective John Law of the Crossroads City Police

WHAT A PACKAGE!

Eclipse Comics has resurrected this long-lost comic and printed it in full color on Baxter stock. 3 complete stories • Fully inked alternate covers • Introduction by Cat Yronwode • The cover, pencilled in 1948, has been newly inked by Will Eisner!

For full details and excerpts of this art, refer to pages 92-98 of *The Art of Will Eisner*. For the Spirit version of the John Law stories, see the "Sand Saref" and "Bring in Sand Saref" stories, most recently reprinted in *Spirit Color Album, Volume II*.

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SPIRIT BAGS No.1 and 3 needed. I have underground Spirit 1 and 2 for possible trade toward these. **Carter Smith**, St. Albans P.O., St. Albans, MO 63073

WARREN SPIRIT MAGAZINES No.1 through 18 wanted. Please send description and asking price to **John Eames**, 757 60th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11220

KITCHEN SPIRITS No. 17, 18, 20 and 22 needed. Please contact **Robert Giusti**, 6250 Bell-Haven Place, Newark, CA 94560 or call (415) 796-5621. Thanks!

KITCHEN UNDERGROUND SPIRIT No.1, 2, Warren Spirit 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11; Spirit Bags 1-4. Please send descriptions and prices to **Erik Horthe**, 2847 Kolbu, Norway. P.S.—I can trade Norwegian Spirits if anyone is interested. I hope to hear from American Spirit fans!

EISNER ITEMS FOR SALE

HARVEY SPIRIT No.1. Eisner giant size color comic from 1966. Origin of Denny Colt. I have many in fine to near mint condition. \$14.00 each, plus \$1.50 postage. **Serge Fidon**, 8352 Willis Avenue, Apt. 28, Panorama City, CA 91402

KITCHEN SINK UNDERGROUND SPIRITS No.1 and 2 in mint condition. \$7.00 each. I have several copies of each issue available. Contact: **Second Genesis**, attention Richard Finn, 1314 S.E. Harrison, Portland, OR 97214

HARVEY SPIRIT No.1, \$10.00; Kitchen Sink Spirit No.1, 2, \$5.00 each; Spirit Bag Set No.1, \$20.00. Postage free. Complete comics sales list free for S.A.S.E. **Todd Goldberg**, 30-10 FDR Drive, New York, NY 10016

SPIRIT UNDERGROUNDS No.1 and 2, near mint. \$10.00 each. **Carter Smith**, St. Albans Post Office, St. Albans, MO 63073

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COMPLETISTS: Will Eisner Interview which appeared only in Dutch fan magazine *Stripprofiel* can be obtained in English translation. For information, send unused U.S. airmail stamp to **Ger Apeldoorn**, t'Veen 17, 1115 HA Duivendrecht, Netherlands.

ORIGINAL SPIRIT SECTIONS, 1940-1946, in very nice shape. List from **James Jurgensen**, B2 Preston Rd, Melford NJ 08848. Incl SASE.

WARREN SPIRIT No.1. Just \$3.00 postpaid. **Classic Movie & Comics Center**, 19047 Middlebelt, Livonia, MI 48152

MORE KUDOS FOR SIMON TALK

I've been following *The Spirit* since the Harvey Comics editions of the sixties, and I still enjoy it under the Kitchen Sink banner. The Joe Simon interview was superb! I could imagine myself in the situations he spoke about, so vividly did he depict his career of yesteryear! I would like to ask Mr. Eisner if a Jerry Grandenetti interview is possible.

Tom Stein
21 Splitrock Rd, South Norwalk, CT 06854

LOVES NEW EISNER ART

I was deeply hurt when I read what Mr. Rossow had to say about "Non-Spirit Garbage" in your Letters section. I will come right out and admit it: the first thing I look at when I buy *The Spirit* is the new art with clear, pleasant, easy on the eye, touching messages of modern day 1983 reality.

Being something of an artist myself, I can appreciate the great design and thought behind this wonderful "garbage." Please keep and produce more Stoops, Street Music and Sentinels!

Mark A. Spengler
1124 Londonberry Ln, Glen Ellyn, IL 60137

VIGNETTES OF URBAN LIFE

Though you may get some complaints about raising the price, *The Spirit*, to me, is a real bargain. The \$2.95 tag may be a "rip off" to some, but in my case I feel like I'm the one who's taking you. Issue No.36, for example, was about a \$4.50 magazine, what with the very first *Spirit* story as well as nineteen pages of new Eisner art. You see, far from being cheated, I just made \$1.55!

Contrary to the opinions of some readers, I like the current balance of new and reprint material. There are only a finite number of *Spirit* stories, after all; besides, why would anyone want to pass up an opportunity to see new work by Mr. Eisner? His vignettes of urban life are just as entertaining as his *Spirit* stories.

In regard to your presentation of the first *Spirit* story, why didn't you reprint the entire section? I would enjoy seeing those back-up features, such as *Lady Luck*, in black & white or in color.

The Spirit is the best value in comics, at whatever price. Keep up the fine work!

David Allen
5 Douglas Drive, Olney, IL 62450

FAN DREAM COME TRUE

I just received (finally!) my copy of *The Art of Will Eisner* and it is beautiful! Truly a fan dream come true. Thanks for making it a possibility.

Larry Brown
Musicland, Gardiner Mall, Bayshore, NY 11706

MORE STRONG OPINIONS

While the number of *Spirit* stories has indeed decreased, the new features are just as good. After all, this is an Eisner book. His conversations with old friends like Milton Caniff and Harvey Kurtzman are priceless! And the new work is FANTASTIC! It is impossible to criticize a man who could easily have rested on his laurels, who instead keeps growing. I say

Bravo!

Re: color. I didn't care much for the garish color on *Album I*. I hope the new colorists do a better job on volume II. As for the color reproduction in No.36, yes and no. I understand the problems of printing and source material involved, but something, maybe too much contrast in the "hard" white gutters and balloons.

As for the cover art, I much prefer the style used on numbers 32, 34 and 35 over 31, 33 and 36.

Roger May
Box 1271, Grass Valley, CA 95946

EISNER POSTER IN MOVIE?

I wonder if any other readers noticed this: In the TV movie *Follow Your Heart*, starring Kate Jackson, which aired in December, there was a scene in which a prominent poster on a wall with a big "Will Eisner" couldn't be missed! I never saw this poster before. Does anybody have any idea what it was?

Wendy Weidig
Colorado Springs, CO

P*S EDITOR COMMENTS

The article on Will Eisner and *PS Magazine* in *The Spirit* No.33 was well done. It brought to mind many memories of Will Eisner in the more than 20 years (1950-1971) that he served as the chief creative artist for *PS*.

We of the magazine's staff, like most journalists, lacked the respect and awe for Will that many in the art business held for him. Brash. We often kidded him about being a "legend in his own time."

Then, too, we occasionally disagreed with Will over just what was the best way to depict a visual idea in *PS*. The visual techniques Will used in the early issues of *PS Magazine* in the 50's have been adopted and still are in use in military technical manuals in the 80's.

PS Magazine is the one military publication that uses cartooning and technical illustration extensively. It has a goal of helping to educate the soldier to keep his combat equipment maintained properly or he may die if he does not. The question we print on the inside back cover of every issue says it best:

"Would You Stake Your Life Right Now on the Condition of Your Equipment?"

Your article raised a question about whether an artist (or a journalist) should devote his efforts to the military. I resolved that problem soon after I took a "summer job" in 1953, a summer I had off from teaching at the West Virginia University School of Journalism. The decision was based on my World War II experience as an Infantry platoon lieutenant in combat. In approximately three months of combat, I was the only platoon lieutenant of the four in my company to survive. Ten men in my platoon were killed. I feel that if I can do anything that will help prevent any of this for our current Army or any future Army, I will do it. This has been my philosophy with *PS Magazine*.

PS speaks directly to the soldier. We use a simple, conversational style of writing that ties in with the cartooning and

...continued on page 64

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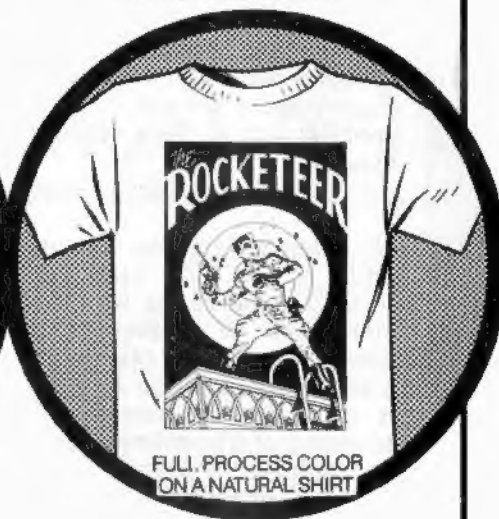


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Will Eisner

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Hunter and Amory Lovins

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Mail order copies \$2.50 postpaid

technical drawings that Will Eisner and other artists trained by Will have done so well.

Will Eisner is proud, and rightly so, of his techniques in visualizing technical messages. He is a pioneer in that. I feel that Will's forte is his genius in setting a mood, showing a scene from an unusual viewpoint, and going incisively to the very guts of a complex matter. He is a tremendously capable writer, too; he used that skill to a fine degree in developing the cartoon continuities for *PS*.

PS has a steady flow of mail directly from soldiers. It runs from 5,000 to 7,000 letters per year. The soldiers offer ideas to improve maintenance, ask for help and make effusive compliments to the magazine and how it is valuable to them. All of this is due to *PS Magazine's* effective communication with the soldier by the use of art and words.

Will Eisner set the pattern in his days as a soldier-artist on *Army Motors* (during World War II) and then for the 20 years as the *PS Magazine* artist. He is, indeed, a legend in his own time.

James R. Kidd

Retired Editor, *PS MAGAZINE*
222 Al-Fan Court, Winchester, KY 40391

SNEAK PREVIEW TIME

I really enjoyed *Spirit Color Album, Volume II*. I thought that the coloring of the panels in *Volume II* was much better than *Volume I*. When is the 3rd volume of this series due to be published?

Three stories that I'd like to see in color are "Sound" from Warren *Spirit* 10, and "Big Arky" and "The Xmas Spirit" from Warren 12. I hope you give these three consideration. I think they're tops.

Is "Life on Another Planet" going to be printed in one volume? Perhaps in color? I heard a rumor about this happening. Any truth to it?

Will Eisner's Spirit Magazine continues to be my favorite comic mag, and about the only one I buy with any regularity.

Monte Beauchamp
Chicago, IL

Monte: *SPIRIT COLOR ALBUM, Volume III* is scheduled for publication this summer. You will see ads in this and other publications. And the rumor about *LIFE ON ANOTHER PLANET* is true! Watch for details and official announcement in a few months.

MOVIE BETTER BE GOOD

I'm excited about the upcoming *Spirit* movie! I only hope that Will Eisner has the final word—or close to it—on the finished product. I shudder to think of what was done to the poor *Lone Ranger*! The film about *The Spirit* should be as great as he is.

A complaint: I like interviews as much as the next guy, but Joe Simon's could have been condensed and edited. Same goes for "Windows." Whose magazine is this anyhow?

John A. Stockton
2315 Ocean Park Blvd, Santa Monica CA

THE DEPT. OF LOOSE ENDS...

(continued from page 1)

bears a certain resemblance to Segar's feisty sailor.

The theme of look-alikes has been a recurrent one in Will's work. During his Army stint, he created a character named Private Dogtag, a goof-up who was a visual forerunner to *The Spirit's* sometime sidekick Sammy. No sooner had he brought Dogtag to life, however, than he introduced his "Ol' Man," a look-alike who could out-hike, out-work and out-brag his wayward son. There were other memorable look-alikes in *The Spirit* after the war: Carfranz Quayle and Carboy T. Gretch shared "Two Lives," on December 12, 1948 and the two Joe Joneses starred in "The Doppelganger" on October 19, 1947. When the latter was reprinted in 1951, it led to a spin-off story in which two identical twins both took turns impersonating Dolan ("Help Wanted," April 29, 1951). Then there were "The Morger Boys," (August 10, 1940) identical quadruplets who attempt to avenge the death of their father.

Dolan, with his cartoony face and his all-too-flappable manner, was a natural for look-alike stories. If Eisner had enjoyed his pre-war and Army attempts at the genre, one can well believe that he was laughing out loud as he set to work on "Tarnation." In this story, printed March 3, 1946, Will outdid himself, and set a look-alike record that has probably never yet been topped. Dead Duck, now known simply as "Pappy," makes his reappearance, accompanied by a gaggle of Texas Dolans almost too numerous to count. Juke Dolan, Sump Dolan, Pewter Dolan, Cousin Sam'l Dolan, Junior Dolan and Onkle Curd Dolan are a wild and wooly bunch, alright. If they don't bear any rational relation to Patrick O'Dolan, scion of an old Irish family and father-presumptive of the clan, you'll probably have to blame the ghost of Elzie Segar. It's either that or Earth Two time. Like I said, we don't give out no-prizes.

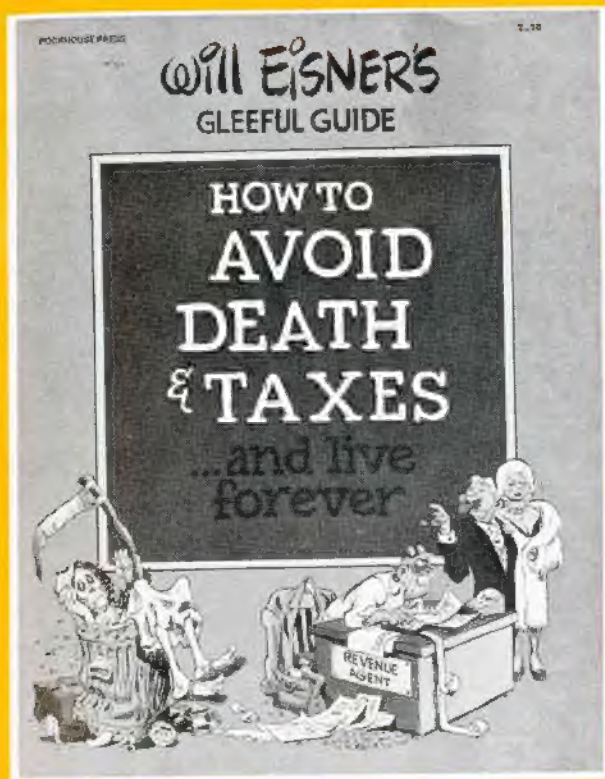
Another facet of Dolan's personality can be seen in "Veta Barra" (July 29, 1951), the second-to-last *Spirit* episode drawn by Eisner.

"The Van Gaull Diamonds," also in this issue, first saw print December 15, 1946. It stars, among others, the ever-popular Silk Satin and her then newly discovered daughter, Hildie. The story also introduces for the first time Mr. McDool, Satin's employer at Croyd's of Glasgow, the company for which she became an insurance investigator after the war. Old time comics fans may also recognize in the name of film star Sterling Steel a wry poke at MLJ's Golden Age hero Steel Sterling.

The colour section this time reprints the fourth *Spirit* episode, "Voodoo in Manhattan." Those who look with kindness on the old "Amos and Andy" radio show, with its tales of the Mystic Knights of the Sea Lodge, will find something familiar here. Others, raised in less indulgent times, may cry "foul." Bear in mind that at the time this story was written, "Amos and Andy" was probably the single most popular show on the air, and its fans were not white bigots but people of all races who liked a good laugh. It's hard to laugh sometimes in these days of racial tension and affirmative action. Let's try anyway, shall we?

—catherine yronwode

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